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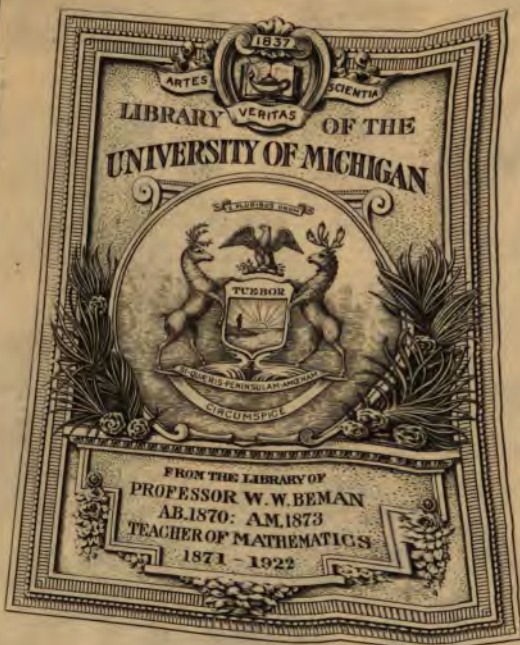
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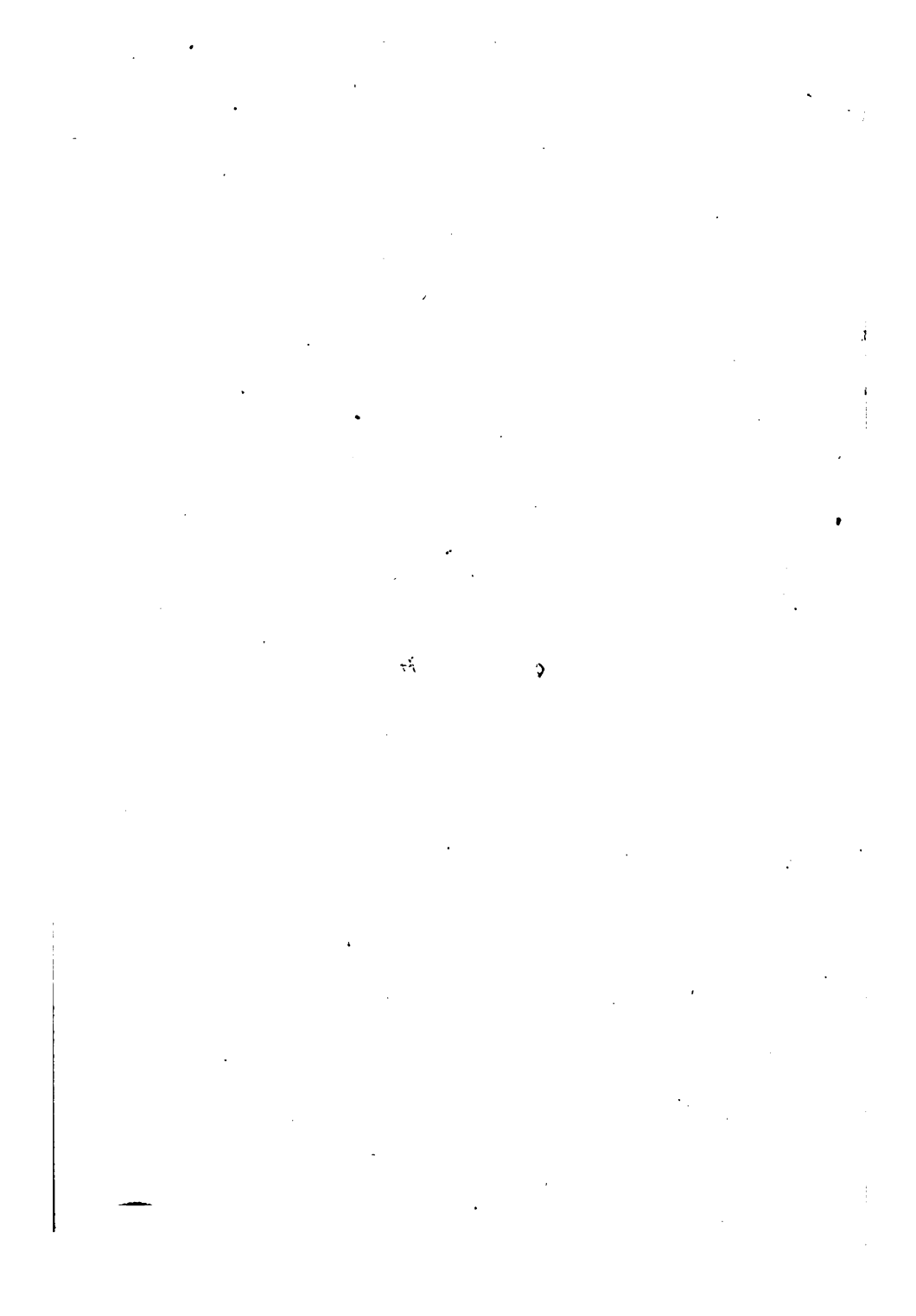
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HEROES AND HIERARCHS

OR

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES AS HELD BY BAPTISTS IN THE
CONTENTION FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY



BY

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PREFACE.

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IN the Centennial review of the forces which have been engaged in modern foreign missions, the position of honor was, by common consent, assigned to the Baptists. This is because they were first called into service by the Commander in Zion; and also because he has so placed and so inspired them as to make their achievements conspicuous. Their heroic leaders, who have served and fallen on many fields, gained renown throughout the Christian world. And of the great army afield to-day, advancing to the conquests of the future, the hosts of this denomination, increased in number and perfected in equipments, are a leading division.

This high distinction must give added interest, with religious people, to the important features of the history of this body of Christians, and to the study of the principles which distinguish them.

Especially will such interest and study attend the work of the Young People's Union, one of whose constitutional objects is "Instruction in Baptist Doctrine and History;" and helps in such instruction, produced by extended research, will be appreciated. To supply such helps to the generations as

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they come upon the field of service is a responsible duty resting upon individuals and societies.

The celebration also of the four hundred years of American history, with the United States in the front, showing the wondrous results of civil and religious freedom here wrought out, commends fresh research into the history of this great principle. The struggles and sacrifices through which it has won its way into fellowship and honor among the nations, claim studious recognition and grateful remembrance. And thankfulness for the overruling providences of God, which have so nearly freed mankind from the necessity of suffering as in the long and terrible past, should be piously stimulated, while the "eternal vigilance which is the price of liberty" should be made more intent in keeping its watch and ward.

While the author believes that the foundation and frame of his work are all his own, much of the material with which it is covered and finished had, of course, to be taken from the stores which the labor of others has provided. When the same matter is found in various works, quotation marks alone distinguish what is copied. Indebtedness to a single author is usually credited.

The biography of Isaac Backus being out of print, and his history little accessible, it seemed important to copy considerably from them the documents bearing on the subject of the present volume.

This work, it will be seen, is not a history of the Baptists, but rather of those Bible principles, and

their representatives of whatever name, which have been met by persecution. While this subject has had frequent treatment in occasional discourses, and in treatises on limited fields of history, or incidentally in general Christian history, it is believed that a comprehensive presentation of it is yet a desideratum, and that its vital bearing on all that is best in human progress and greatest in Christian beneficence, awaits a just revelation.

The history of the Christian religion exhibits throughout, as among its worst foes, those of its own nominal household, and of these foes the leaders have been and are hierarchs. Priestly usurpers and ecclesiastical orders, constructing and operating church establishments, have inflicted a tyrannical lordship over God's heritage.

Under the Old Testament dispensation, priests, high and lower, were legitimate, for the Lord's will was but in process of revelation, and his teaching and guidance were directly through his appointed human ministers; but whenever ungodly men usurped the office for selfish ends, it became mercilessly persecuting to God's faithful servants. Thus the high priestly commander of the temple scourged and imprisoned the faithful Jeremiah for speaking what God sent him to the temple to speak. And, as a class, those "pastors of the people," "shepherds that feed themselves and feed not the flock," had denounced upon them the heaviest woes.

In Christ's time the blameless and dutiful priests,

like Zacharias, had become almost extinct, and a race of oppressors had succeeded in the office. Their plots against the life of the Lord were early formed and persistently worked until, from the weak hands of the cowardly Roman governor, he was delivered up to them to be crucified. Beneath the whited surface Christ had seen the deadly wickedness all the while, and against it his most scathing woes had been hurled. There is nothing that merits denunciation so much as when "Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light."

When Christ, by his teaching and his offering himself a sacrifice "once for all," had opened to all comers the new and living way of access to God, and had given to each soul to read for himself "all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him," priests and potentates in religion were forever retired. Their office expired by limitation, never to be revived. Christ is sole and sufficient as "High Priest over the house of God," and his blood-purchased ones "of every tribe and tongue and people and nation" are made a kingdom and priests, not over other men, but unto our God.

Hence, after Christ's ascension, there should never have been on earth a sacerdotal office or order, and claimants of these have all been, blindly or impiously, arrogant pretenders. Yet the burners of New Testament inspiration were scarcely all lighted up before the class of Diotrophes, loving to have the pre-eminence, and prating with evil words, intruded among

the disciples, prohibiting in the churches and casting out of them whom they would ; and this intrusion and assumption, claiming hierarchical power and exercising it tyrannically, have never ceased to infest the Lord's heritage.

It is the design of this volume to show how the principles of the word of Christ, embodied in heroic defenders of them, have contested the domination of these usurpers, and that these principles are the ones which have ever been held and contested for by such Christians as in the recent centuries have come to be called Baptists.

It will be necessary, therefore, first to distinguish and place in clear view the Bible principles specially involved in this contest. We shall then be prepared to trace their warfare, and identify their assailants and defenders.

Attention is invited to the specific source whence those principles are deduced which enter into the constitution and govern the work of the Christian church, as an organized, aggressive body. The same deduction might have been made from other sources in the Scriptures, but it seemed most fit to take the teaching at its fountain head, if that has been rightly identified.

The author ventures also to ask particular attention to Part II of the book, in its illustrative bearing upon the great work of missions. If the showing is just, it deserves a prominence which it has not had in missionary literature ; and the stories of heroic

suffering and sublime achievement, no longer in the current reading of the people as they were scores of years ago, should not be allowed to become forgotten and unknown. To an "Old Mortality," the work of chiseling the moss off from the memorials of these endurances and victories, has been peculiarly a fond one.

The closing chapter is thought to be germane to the subject, and of timely appropriateness.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE HIERARCHICAL ELEMENT IN HISTORY.

THE priest in history is a figure which must be studied if much of history itself is to be well understood. Priesthood and kingship have filled great parts in the drama of humanity, and to the sinister confederacy between these two, it is in large measure due that the drama of humanity has in some ages of the world become so tragic.

The priest, also, in much that we find recorded of him, is an example of that perversion of the good which changes it to evil. It is because there is, among men, religion, and in religion the mediatorial idea, that such a thing as priesthood was ever possible. The function of the priest, whether real or assumed, is necessarily religious; and it is the mediatorial idea in religion which makes his function so much a distinctive one. That question which a prophet of old puts in the mouth of a seeker after truth,—“Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God?”—has been heard among men from the days of Abel until now; among men of all conditions, all degrees of intelligence, and religious insight. It is as common to

men as is the sense of ill-desert, and that sense of ill-desert must be present wherever there is a conscience in any degree enlightened and faithful to its trust.

Because of this urgent sense of need for some medium of approach to Deity, some propitiatory mediation, the priest exists. Whether as officiating amid the pomp of cathedral splendor, or as the half-crazed medicine man of the American Indian, he has the same attribute and the same pretension, while save in one exceptional sphere he is always a pretender and a deceiver. Priesthood, apart from that divine appointment for which the types of the ancient dispensation prepared the way, and which, fulfilling those types in the person and office of the great High Priest of our Christian profession, concentrates in one divine Person all the dignity and all the functions of that gracious intervention,—save as type in the one case and fulfillment in the other,—priesthood, in whatever form of religion and by whatever name called, is a perversion and a misnomer.

At the same time priesthood, in a true sense of the word, is a necessary part of religion. Whether in antediluvian times such an office existed, there is nothing to show with certainty; there is reason to believe that so far as aught resembling it did exist, it was an office discharged by the patriarch,—a Seth, an Enoch, a Noah,—the last of whom we find thus officiating, as if the priest of his household, as they came forth from the ark. Abraham may have dis-

charged a like office, since we find the young Isaac inquiring, as he and his father draw near the spot where the father's faith is to be so sorely tried, "My father, behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" showing familiarity with the rite in all its essentials. In Abraham's time, too, comes forth upon the historic scene that marvelous figure, Melchizedek, "King of Salem and priest of God Most High," in the Epistle to the Hebrews shown to have been the type of a greater King, and one who is "a Priest forever."

Not to dwell upon this, the existence of sacrifice and of priesthood in some meaning of the word from a very early time, is made clearly certain by allusions in ancient narrative such as these to which we refer. Among idolatrous peoples, as among that true succession of holy men in whom a true faith and a true worship were preserved, it existed, showing how common to humanity is that sense of need to which we have referred, and hence how susceptible of use for purposes of priestly usurpation and spiritual despotism is that in man which so prompts the anxious query, "Wherewith shall I come?"

It is only as what we here mention is held clearly in view that the hierarchical element in human history can be adequately studied or understood. There is much to narrate, in the pages that follow the brief review which we here attempt, of wickedness wrought in this world by usurping priesthood. It will become evident that no form of usurpation has been so out-

rageous, or has been the direct or indirect instrument of so much evil and such immeasurable suffering, as that of the priest. Why has he been endured?—Simply because of his success in compelling belief that to him as a priest had been assigned a mediatorial office and efficiency indispensable to acceptable worship; indispensable, even, to salvation for the soul itself.

It is important to the end we have here in view to make the point clear in what the function of the priest actually consists. The priest of the ancient dispensation was not a public teacher. That was the office of the prophet. He was not, save as some such office was occasionally assumed, a political leader or adviser. That, also, in so far as conveying to rulers counsel or warning as to the divine will in the ordering of public affairs, fell to the prophet. The office of the priest was simply that of offering sacrifice, and in general, performing the ritual of the sanctuary. With a view to magnifying that idea of atonement and mediation which was to culminate in the person of him who was at one and the same time Priest and Victim, the sacrificial function in the priest of Israel was itself magnified until it served to impress the people with the indispensableness of such mediation in their approaches to God. It was a lesson, indeed, for all time, and should make the more evident and the more impressive to every Christian believer and to all inquirers after God, how impossible it is to

come acceptably on any errand of prayer save in that one true and living way,—the atonement and mediation of the self-offered Son of God.

What we thus set forth affords a clue to hierarchical assumption in one aspect of it. The several offices of the Roman priesthood have been assigned and adjusted with the most clear-sighted recognition of what is essential in the exercise of priestly power. The ceremonial of the mass, sacrificial in form, invests the person of the priest with a glamour of sacredness, which compels homage and prepares the way for whatever of personal control he may wish to exercise. At the confessional he claims and exercises the right to explore all the secrets of the life, to know of every sin committed, in thought, word, or act, and then assumes to hold in his hand the power either to dispense or refuse the absolution which shall send the penitent away rejoicing or despairing. As death draws near, his presence at the bedside is for deliverance or for doom, according as his right in either case shall be devoutly acknowledged. His administration of “extreme unction,”—the final anointing,—if he shall consent to give it, seals salvation to the dying, or if refused leaves him to a death without hope. In every way the priestly idea is made available so as to insure to the priest in his priestly capacity, a power exercised by no other human being, and belonging to him, though he were the most dissolute and repulsive mendicant friar,

begging his bread from door to door. Such as this the priest has been in times of less enlightenment than our own, and such he still is in essentials.

So far we view the priest more as he is in his individual capacity. Hierarchy is priestly rule. It is power grounded in that function which we have thus far described, and exercised with a view to ends of its own. Its existing representative is the Roman priesthood, viewed as a whole, in its several orders, from lowest to highest, with the pope as supreme over all. Changed conditions of modern life, especially growth of intelligence and the spirit of personal freedom, with nationality and social order resting on truer foundations and ruled in accordance with larger ideas, have made hierarchy much less a name of dread than it was in darker ages. In form, however, it is still what it remained during so many centuries of modern history, with its principle unchanged, although application of that principle after the older ideal may never again be possible.

It is a striking example of the working together of occult and subtle causes, as we see the simple apostleship and ministry of the New Testament growing, from age to age, into that formidable enginery of spiritual despotism,—the hierarchy of the middle ages. No contrast in history is more striking, no example more impressive of that possible perversion to evil from which the good in this world seems never to be free.

There is not space here for any detailed study of

that process of sinister change to which we refer. In the primitive times of our religion, "each little brotherhood," says Harnack, was to be, "through the strength of its faith, the certainty of its hope, and the holy ordering of its life, as well as through love and peace, an image of the holy church of God which is in heaven, and whose members are scattered over the earth." Nothing could be more simple than its organization, nothing less like domination or lordship in the pastorate provided for it. History has not preserved for us in any minuteness of detail, the steps by which all this was changed: The simple eldership growing into a lordship; the oversight of the flock, implied in the word *episcopos*, "overseer," bishop, becoming domination over the flock; successive orders, from priest to metropolitan and pope, or patriarch, growing out of the original single office of pastor; the idea of a community and fellowship of all the churches, each the equal of the other, changed to that of the *one* church, fashioned in its official structure, its laws and its rule, after the imperialism of pagan Rome; — all this by about the middle of the third century becoming more or less a complete development, though reaching its consummate form much later. The process of it even history attempts to follow only in main outline, while back of all which history can trace is the working of those silent and subtle forces in which love of power, ambition for pre-eminence, and in fine, the intrusion of a spirit utterly worldly, turns to personal or party

ends, the faith of the common Christianity and the hope of the soul.

Thus originating and thus framed after the ideals of a pagan imperialism, hierarchy appears in history with scarcely a check upon its pretensions to universal dominion during the long, dark period from the fourth to the sixteenth century. Its extravagances wrought its own ruin at last. Even the most subservient of those rulers over whom it exercised domination tired of it in the end ; and when the Reformation came with its primitive gospel, its assertion of the rights of humanity, its freedom of faith and of worship, its ideas of nationality and citizenship, partial though its realizations were, the reign of hierarchy, as a spiritual absolutism, in the measure of its former supremacy, was over.

The leading thought in what Dr. Haskell has with such graphic force presented in the chapters which follow this introduction is, clearly, the conflict in successive ages between the usurpations of hierarchy as here described, and that inborn sense of a right to free opinion and an unbridled conscience which belongs to the very nature of man, and becomes supreme allegiance to God in the regenerate soul. We see, here, two forces in collision, between which, so long as both survive and both are active, there must of necessity be eternal war. Each derives strength and persistence from the very intensity of the mutual struggle. Hierarchy early became aware that the native moral and spiritual freedom of the human

soul was not to be either crushed or intimidated easily. It accordingly armed itself at an early day with all the terrors which persecution in its most savage form could invent. The pagan persecutor taught his papal imitator a lesson in this regard which was by no means lost. When the rack and the fire succeeded to the dungeon and the wild beast of the amphitheater, the scholar in cruelty was found to have even surpassed his master in the art of torturing murder. Against all this, during ages of awful suffering, the hero of faith has stood simply in the attitude of endurance, and by simple endurance has conquered at last.

Hierarchy, in this bad work of persecution, has been made more formidable by its alliance with kingship. In common phrase we term this the alliance of Church and State. Whatever softened forms this alliance may have assumed in later ages, the fact remains that its essential nature is a confederacy between secular and so-called spiritual despotism to subdue and bind that freedom for the soul of man which is its birthright. The bad distinction of originator for this worst of all crimes, belongs rather, it must be said, to the priest than to the king. Indeed, the king has often, one might almost say, commonly, become the confederate by first being made the victim. More slavish submission to priestly art, compelled through methods already described, has rarely been seen, than in the case of men and women who sat on thrones. Conscious of their badness, and

dured by the subtle strategy of priestly art, they have yielded to priestly hands as instruments of persecution, the powers confided to them as supposed ministers of justice, for the protection of each individual subject and the promotion of the common weal.

If it were possible to believe that cruelties thus instigated had any such motive as sincere conviction supplies, the indignation which one feels in contemplation of hierarchical wrongs and outrages might be in some degree softened. Where, under the influence of such conviction men who were not priests, nor acting under priestly instigation, have become persecutors,—as it is sad to say otherwise good men in past time have done,—however we condemn the act, we can at least accept the motive. Calvin and the New England theocrats were at least honest in the persuasion that what they held for true could not be trusted to maintain its own cause by virtue of its truth alone, but must have the support of secular authority, or rather that secular and spiritual authority must be lodged in the same hands, and this as much for the benefit of the state as for that of the church. They were good men, deeply and sadly mistaken. It is impossible to urge the same plea in behalf of men who, so far from being good men, shared in the worst vices of their time; with whom intrigue and shameful subserviency alternated with impudent assumption in their dealing with those in power, through whom they wrought

the vast evil which history charges upon them ; who were as completely without pity as without shame ; and on whose skirts, at the last day of awful assize, will surely be found the blood of thousands and thousands who perished in crusades and dragonnades, sought out even in "the Alpine mountains," and with pitiless indiscrimination hurled to destruction — even —

"Mother with infant down the rocks."

Honest conviction and genuine loyalty to truth as little instigate such deeds as these as they do the vile arts in which by playing upon the passions of kings and their satellites the priesthood made themselves, during centuries of misrule and suffering, the power for evil behind every oppressive despotism in Europe. To make "the church," concentrated in the hierarchy, supreme, is the motive which candid history everywhere fixes upon them, and under the stigma of this motive, with the hypocrisy and iron-heartedness inseparable from it, they stand forever condemned.

We are glad that Dr. Haskell has written this book. Its happily chosen title sets over against each other the two forces which we mention above, and whose contrast and conflict give to the history so reviewed its characteristic features. There is no truer heroism than is found in patient suffering for conscience' sake. The men and women whose names appear in the deeply interesting chapters which follow, are the true heroes and heroines of history. As

will be observed, they appear on the scene at almost the very first moment of Christian history itself. They are still in the world, wherever, as in Russia, hierarchical supremacy has not wholly become an evil of the past. Their suffering is their testimony. Wherever there is, among those by whom persecution is no longer to be feared, feebleness of conviction, looseness of principle as to obligations of Christian fidelity, time-serving worldliness, or half-hearted service, these are all rebuked by what is recorded in these pages, as in others besides, of what the heroes of faith have endured in testimony to that truth which the world never needed more than it needs it to-day.

PART I.

**REGENERATIVE PIETY AND RELIGIOUS
LIBERTY.**

CHAPTER I.

THE STORY OF THE CHURCH.

“The gates of hades shall not prevail against it.”

IN the much controverted teaching of Christ (Matt. 16:13-20) we claim that he has shown us the plan on which he promised visibly to build his church. And in this plan we see the impregnable church,—its building material, its government, and the history assured to it. Here, therefore, we shall find the principles which should have secured the peace and prosperity of the Christian Zion, but which, opposed, have evolved her conflicts, fulfilling Christ's strange forewarning: “I came not to send peace, but a sword.”

In the interpreting and applying of this teaching, three mistakes have been made, which have become historic, and have wrought in persistent hostility to the truth, and to the true people of God.

The first is the papal mistake, making the “rock” to be Peter officially, constituting him the foundation and head of the church, with absolute and infallible authority, and by an absurd fiction, perpetuating him through an endless succession of popes, regardless of the personal character which any in the succession should bear. The mistake is exposed by the facts that Christ's teaching constituted no individual office

or officer ; that what he addressed to Peter was to him as a representative of all like him, as shown in its repetition in Matt. 18 : 17-20 and John 20 : 22-23 ; and that Peter immediately after this teaching was reproved by Christ as blindly fallible, that he repeatedly showed himself in error, and never claimed or had acceded to him any official superiority.

The second is the creedal mistake, that the "rock" is Peter's confession, as a doctrinal statement, and that this is the creed on which whatever is built is Christ's church. This mistake is exposed by the facts that it would justify building a church with demons as its members, for they all made in words the same confession ; and that so-called churches thus built have been spiritually lifeless, and often malignantly persecuting. A creed that rightly expresses Bible truths is good furniture in a church, but it is not material of which a church can be built.

The third mistake is the mystic one, that "this rock" is Christ, and that by inflection in his utterance, or gesture, or some other means, Christ so indicated. To discredit this it is sufficient to say that no reader of the English or the Greek would have conceived or admitted it but for a supposed doctrinal necessity, and to antagonize the papal error. Christ is the chief corner-stone, and the pervasive life in the spiritual body of all his redeemed ; but he is not the visible foundation of the church which in this conversation he promised that he would thereafter

build. In the church as organized he does not appear at all. It is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets" — a habitation of God in the Spirit. Eph. 2 : 20-22. Of the cup given for church use, Christ said : "Drink of it, all of ye ; but I say unto you that I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Matt. 26 : 29.

For the true understanding of our Lord's teaching, let us take him at his word : "Thou art Peter [rock], and upon this rock" — the pronoun referring to Peter, and fastening our thought to him as the rock. But what Peter is our thought bound to by the "this" ? — It is the Peter of whom, as he had just disclosed what grace had wrought in him, Christ exclaimed : "Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven," — Peter, born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" — a child of God, thus having revealed in him the life-giving Christ, just as his brother apostle, by the same grace, was brought where he could say : "When it pleased God to reveal his Son *in* me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood" (Gal. 1 : 16), — Peter, the regenerate, lighted up in his inner life by the Holy Spirit's taking of Christ, and showing it in the sin-darkened, sin-condemned soul. Flesh and blood never did, and never will, reveal Christ as the Saviour that he

is to the condemned, and as the justified by faith behold him. As diverse, and all of it as false, as was the reasoning of men reported by the disciples in this conversation, is the reasoning of unregenerate men to-day, as to the being and offices of Christ.

But the old Peter is gone, and Christ by his questioning has unveiled the new Peter. And now what does he propose to do with him? We have been guided by the small pronoun, let us now be guided by the smaller preposition:—

Epi (Robinson's Greek Lexicon), "with the dative" (as here): "Accession, or addition to something which has been previously mentioned."¹ Then we say, Added to, or gathered to, this rock, Peter, as here disclosed. Thus in Matt. 25:20 the servant with the talents, using the same preposition, said: "Thou gavest me five talents; I have added to them, of the same, five more." Thus also Paul said: "Lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow" (Phil. 2:27), picturing the sorrow as accumulated by the adding of like sorrows.

And now what do we see as Christ's plan of building?—Adding, or gathering to this rock,—the regenerate, God-illumed Peter,—other regenerate, God-illumed believers, I will build my church. This is my specimen of the building material,—the specimen to be first placed, as at Pentecost among the Jews, and at Cæsarea among the Gentiles, and to have like material added to it as the buildings rise. Thus all who are properly brought into Christ's church are

¹ Buttman's Greek Grammar, § 147, Note 4.

seen here in the plan, as ever after in the erections, to be experimental believers, in whom, as in Peter and Paul and all the first Christians, Christ is divinely revealed.

Many years after being thus instructed by the Master, Peter wrote the same instruction to the believers whom he was teaching. Of Christ, who has life in himself, and quickeneth whom he will, he says: "To whom coming, a living stone, ye also as living stones are built up, a spiritual house."

Such being his church, Christ declares it impregnable. It is a living, spiritual organism. Instinct with the vital force infused and sustained by Christ, it has the power to throw off disorders, repel assaults, and grow and reproduce itself, as in nature the good tree does. Thus the history of the church is assured as persistent and triumphant.

It is of the church, in which practically there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some unto honor and some unto dishonor, — it is respecting this imperfectly realized church that we are assured: "The firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal," with the double inscription, "The Lord knoweth them that are his," and, "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness."

Such an organization its Head can wisely intrust with self-government. Its members are partakers of the divine nature, inhabited by the divine Spirit, and will be led by the Word and Spirit in their

action ; and hence our Lord closes his teaching here with the promise that when his building should have been erected as the visible seat of his reign, called the kingdom of heaven, he would give its keys to its own Petrine members — keys by which we admit and exclude, being, in the figurative style of the great Teacher, the symbol of government.

That this independency of outside human rule is what Christ conferred upon the church, is proved by his express words already referred to, and by the action of the churches under apostolic direction, as seen in the Acts and the epistles. Acts 9 : 26–29, and several allusions in Acts 15, also in the directions given in 1 Cor. 5 : 4, 5, and 2 Cor. 2 : 7–9, etc.

While self-government in churches is to be distrusted in the hands of those “darkened in their understanding and alienated from the life of God,” it is productive of only good as exercised by those who have so learned Christ as to put on the new man created in the righteousness and holiness of truth. Eph. 4 : 22–25.

The whole teaching of our passage might have a pleasing illustration if one having found a honey-bee should thus apostrophize : Blessed art thou, little insect ! Flesh and blood have not endowed thee with the instincts which I know thee to possess, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say unto thee, that thou art a honey-bee, and gathering unto thee others like thyself, I will build my swarm of bees ; and irrepressibly they shall preserve their home, and

work together and make honey, and reproduce themselves perpetually, ordering their life in peaceful self-government.

This self-government in churches involves, of course, the personal religious liberty of all men. Not only Christ's direct teaching, but the Bible as a whole, Old Testament as well as New, accords this liberty to every person. The seeming instances of divinely authorized civil punishment on irreligionists, or no-religionists, or false prophets, can perhaps be reduced to criminal "doing presumptuously, with a high hand," acts which under the theocracy were defiant treason, as in case of the Sabbath desecrator, who on trial was convicted, apparently under that law, and executed, and similarly when false prophets were judicially slain. For the personal choice for one's self of idol-worship, or no worship, or the withholding of religious tithes and offerings, or violating the law of the Sabbath, no man was arraigned otherwise than by the reproofs of God's ministers. Clearly in the New Testament the principle of soul-freedom is always asserted. When James and John asked if they should call down fire to consume a supposed opposing sect, Christ rebuked them, saying, according to our version, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." By the sermon on the mount, how free is every one left to stand or fall before his own master! And with what love is every man commanded to bear himself toward his fellow-man! Such is the church of Christ.

“Bulwarks of mighty grace defend
The city where we dwell;
The walls, of strong salvation made,
Defy the assaults of hell.

“Lift up the everlasting gates,
The doors wide open fling;
Enter, ye nations that obey
The statutes of our King.

“Here shall you taste unmingled joys,
And live in perfect peace,
You who have known Jehovah's name,
And ventured on his grace.”

As here seen, and as exhibited in subsequent New Testament history, the Bible principles whose conflicts we have proposed to trace, are : A regenerate church membership ; baptism consistently limited to those regenerated through personal faith, and to the act prescribed by the inspired word ; the freedom of churches from outside domination by man ; and the religious liberty of every accountable human being.

The same principles are discernible in the plan of the gospel church, as foreshown by Old Testament prophets; as in the temple delineations of Ezekiel. We are constrained to regard these as figurative descriptions of the foreseen church, because of the absurd contradictions of New Testament teaching which they would present if they predicted a literal temple with its priests and ritualistic observances. In his vision of the house of the Lord, in the forty-fourth chapter, the prophet is bidden to mark its noteworthy distinctions : —

“And I looked, and behold the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord. And I fell upon my face.” The Holy Spirit dwells in the church of Christ. His person, and not that of the Son, is the Immanuel of this dispensation. As the shekinah in the temple and tabernacle told that God was there, so the prophet saw in the church what to us is invisible, but which is “the promise of the Father,” fulfilled in the true church from the day of Pentecost. It is this, and this alone, before which men of spiritual discernment fall down. “Each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.” This secures a spiritual brotherhood and an indestructible life. Without this, so-called churches are but the world under false names. When Moses was ordered to lead Israel through wanderings infested with powerful enemies, he pleaded his utter dependence on the presence of God, pledged by the pillar of cloud and fire: “Wherein shall it be known that we have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separate, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.” And to-day God’s people have no other distinction that infallibly proves them his, and gives them achieving power.

“And the Lord said unto me, Son of man, mark well, and behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, all that I say unto thee concerning all the ordinances of the house of the Lord, and all the laws

thereof." The word of God alone determines all the ordinances and laws of the church of Christ, just as would be supposed in case of one dwelling in his own house as its head. On no subject more than on this have other voices ever been clamorous for a hearing to be given them; and it is because the faithful sons and daughters of him who is Head of the body, the church, have insisted that he alone shall speak as to ordinances and laws, that they have been put to tortures and death as his martyrs.

Judaism still persists in standing on the floor of the church, striking down with the staff of a worn-out and excused old age, and demanding that its decayed covenant of circumcision shall yet be law. Tradition wanders in from the early centuries, commanding a hearing of the confused voices of the Fathers. Councils and churches adduce their decrees, and claim that they must silence the debate. Hierarchies seat "the church" in the place of Christ. Accommodating religion urges that ordinances and laws are unessential, and asks the members in the church and the candidates at its door, what they prefer. Liberalism applies the sword to every Gordian knot, and leaves Zion without cords or stakes.

But to none of this clamor does Christ yield the floor. Steadily his word is, "Son of man, mark well, and behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, all that I say unto thee concerning all the ordinances of the house of the Lord, and all the laws thereof." In my personal teachings I stand and

speak. Hear with thine own ears. By my inspiration I guide my apostles in executing my laws, and in writing them for the government of my erected house, through all time. Behold with thine eyes. And it is for the church of Christ to sit, with eyes fixed and ears attent, marking well, and marking only, the words of her Lord.

But here is a memorable portion of the battleground where the faithful have been set upon by persecutors, and every device has been brought into play to drive them from hearing and obeying Jesus only: Here, therefore, we shall find what religious liberty has cost, and who have paid the cost.

“And mark well the entering in of the house.” It is especially a noteworthy feature. Who goes in? and how does he go in?—Just as would be again supposed, they whom the Holy Spirit, resident in the house, has brought to be of his household and to apply at its door. This was shown to Ezekiel, and the house of the Lord in question was certified to be the gospel church, when he was charged to proclaim: “Thus saith the Lord God, No stranger uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary.” Over the portals of no Jewish institution was there ever placed such an absolute prohibition of the uncircumcised in heart.

And as to the visible entrance of those thus spiritually qualified, the Lord’s instructions to the apostolic builders of his church are clear: “Baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and

of the Holy Spirit." Widening this entrance so as to admit all as they are born into the world, is to abolish the church. No longer is there an "ecclesia," a body called out by the Holy Spirit from the unregenerate mass, "a peculiar people." Changing baptism from a burial to the drops upon the forehead, and the Supper from a proclaiming of the Lord's death to a showing of social fellowship, or a priestly ministering of his pretended flesh to absolve from sin, are the sacrifice of divine authority and most helpful significance in ordinances. For refusing to submit to these changes, Christians have been despoiled of their liberties and their lives in untold numbers. "Mark well the entering in of the house."

"With every going forth of the sanctuary;" the issues from the church of Christ are another noteworthy feature of it. These are saving influences, not as immediately from the Fountain, as the hierarchical and sacramentarian heresies arrogate, but as from the spring through which the Fountain discharges. Ps. 87:7. This again is as would be expected from the Holy Spirit's residence in the church.

These influences flow out in many forms: in the unrestricted diffusion of the word of God; in the perfect freedom of witnesses, that they "daily in the temple, and in every house, cease not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ;" in missionary evangelizing to which all lands are to lie open; in Christian

education, that opens to all alike its privileges of instruction and training ; in the free religious press, that sends truth as a pulse through the whole body of humanity. In these, and in every form of saving influence, civil and religious liberty are involved, as the right of every responsible being. As in property rights no person may put obstructions in a navigable stream, so in religious rights no power may intercept the flow of the waters which the prophet saw as they "issued out from under the threshold of the house."

But what contests have had to be fought and suffered out along the whole course of every stream that has thus issued from the church of Christ ! Her principles are therefore militant, and armed with them, as an organized host of God's elect, she was bidden advance into the revolted world. Let us see what combatants she met, and who proved loyal to the divine teaching.

CHAPTER II.

HEROES OF THE APOSTOLIC PERIOD.

“ If I have not love, I am nothing.”

IT is noteworthy that Peter, whom Christ made the representative of the principles on which his kingdom was to wage its warfare, became the first and representative sufferer in maintaining those principles ; and that the persecutions which he encountered were all instigated by the Jewish hierarchy.

It is natural that unregenerate men should contend violently against being displaced from those positions which inure to their selfish advantage. If Christ and his organized kingdom came to possess the field as the system of religion, Judaism, with its numberless offices of leadership, honor, and emolument, would have to disappear. The social dignitaries must come down to the grade where the law is : “ One is your Master, the Christ, and all ye are brethren.” Against this the whole hierarchical system put itself in determined defense. The conspiracy against Christ himself, in all its conduct, was thus inspired and led by the priestly class ; and in the persecutions of the apostolic period the same was true, the civic powers being but the tools of the religious hierarchs.

Accordingly, while the apostles were yet prosecut-

ing the great achievements of the pentecostal week, in which Christ built his church as he had planned, Peter and John found themselves arrested and put on trial in the Sanhedrim, before "the high priest and as many as were of his kindred." And though the court was compelled by the popular feeling in favor of the prisoners to release them with nothing worse than the severest threats, soon afterward came a renewed arrest of the same apostles, with the manifest purpose of killing them. Intimidated in this purpose by the wise cautions of Gamaliel, a cruel beating and sterner threats accompanied the discharge, after God had by his angel miraculously opened the prison doors, and led out his prisoners, bidding them "go and stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life."

To these violent dealings and threats Peter and John make and reiterate this memorable response — the first displaying in Christ's church of the banner which was to be borne at such cost through all the centuries, in faithful and martyr hands: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye, for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard." "We must obey God rather than men." And they followed their heroic answer by still preaching Jesus and the resurrection, in the face of their persecutors.

It was more than human wisdom and valor that dictated this sublime avowal, and dedicated it to its mission down the ages. Christ had promised these

men that when they should be thus arraigned, as he assured them they would be, they need not be anxious what they should speak, "For it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak ; for it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you."

This avowal involves the complete idea of religious freedom as divinely bestowed and universally applicable. It involves the fact that God has given ability to judge what his will is to each accountable person, and the more perfectly to those who have his revealed word. It denies that man may interdict what God enjoins ; it claims that where man requires or forbids differently from God, God's will is to be obeyed ; and it declares the imperative duty of doing, by speech or whatever other act, that which God gives us to do for others' good.

This principle gives no license, and leaves unguarded no liability, to do wrong ; for God has himself defined and prohibited all criminal or hurtful actions, and what is criminal he has empowered civil government to restrain or punish. The Mormon cannot shelter his polygamy under religious freedom, for God has expressly forbidden it, and requires civil government to repress it. The deluded parent cannot plead a just conviction for killing his child, for God has said : "Thou shalt not kill," and has hung to the belt of the magistrate not in vain the sword that takes blood for blood. The public blasphemer and debaucher of thought and habit in other people,

or the violator of other men's Sabbath rights, cannot commit these offences against society with impunity, under the pretense of personal liberty, for God has guarded public morals against this, and observances that do not entrench upon the same liberty in others are a right which man never gave or can take away, but all must respect.

The next heroic leader in maintaining these principles was Stephen, who stood forth, and spoke calmly on what God had given him to say, in the face of his priestly murderers; and who, with John the Baptist, headed the long procession of Christian martyrs. Could he have consented to be silent, he would have been unmolested, but he was another of the mailed knights whose armorial ensign blazoned the allegiance: "We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard." And so he "fell a blessed martyr, with tears wept on him," as devout men bore the body to burial.

The young man Saul, who shared in the stoning of Stephen, when apprehended on the Damascus road had upon his person letters from the high priest unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the way, whether man or woman, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. It was the hierarchy against the church. And when he who then was the furious agent of the priestly party became himself a Christian, and persecution turned upon him as its hunted victim, it was the same hierarchy that followed on his track through the long course that he kept in

sufferings so manifold, and finished in martyrdom. Their emissaries followed him in his missionary tours from city to city and from nation to nation. By them he was stoned, and by their instigation Roman lictors beat him with rods. When he stood arraigned and asserting his conscientiousness before the Jewish council, it was the high priest who commanded : "Smite him on the mouth," and to whom he boldly returned the righteous retort : "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall : sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" It was the hero and the hierarch in single encounter, with all the priestly confederacy backing their chief, but the majority of "one with God" defying them.

Because it pleased these titled Jews, Herod killed the apostle James, with the sword, and attempted the same with Peter. It was likewise the priestly class in the pagan religions of this period that joined with the Jewish persecutors in putting to trial the faith and the steadfastness of the early Christians.

The heresies which invaded the churches before the exiled apostle John closed the inspired record, were those which undermine the Bible principles on which Christ built and commissioned his churches, and declared them invincible, and on which Baptists have ever maintained their stand.

In the epistle of Jude heresies are described as the creeping assaults of ungodly men who assumed the office of teachers. Of course they were gross

violators of the primary law of Christ's kingdom; for in nothing is that law more imperative than that the teacher and leader must be an example to the flock of the regenerate character which every member must possess. Christ put this in the foreground when he said: "He that entereth in by the door into the sheepfold, is the shepherd of the sheep." "I am the door. By me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and shall find pasture." "And he goeth before his sheep, and they follow him, for they know his voice." And in giving Peter his final charge, with thrice-pressed heart-searching he reiterated that not merely friendly, but gracious, love is the indispensable qualification for feeding the lambs, and tending and feeding the sheep for whom he gave his life. Unconverted teachers would directly substitute unconverted members in the churches, confounding them with the world, and bringing the true membership under worldly domination. Then State and Church and civil oppression readily succeed.

Thus the Apocalypse discloses how the churches which had left their first love, had a name to live and were dead, and must repent and do their first works, or the candlestick, having no longer a light to hold, would be removed.

The further destructive heresies, privily brought in by false teachers, as Peter describes it, were a denial of our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ,— "even the Master that bought them,"—under the

covert of unsuspected language, "with feigned words;" as when in our day the terms of a true theology are made the covert under which delusive errors are insinuated. Another heresy was the turning of the grace of God into lasciviousness, as in the antinomianism of the Gnostics, who made the gospel a release from the moral requirements of the law, and a license for dissoluteness. "The teaching of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate," said Christ.

And again: there was the heresy, under similar coverts, of denying the retributions of the future state, saying that the judgment was passed already, and that there is no final decision of doom upon the wicked; or saying, as this specious assault has ever said, and says to-day, God is too good to punish his creatures as Christians have believed that he forewarns he will do,—imputing to him an unprincipled goodness, which Jude and Peter repel by calling to remembrance what God has done in history. In this heresy it was, as Jude declares, false teachers like Balaam who assailed the faith intrusted to the saints for safe guarding.

The apostles and faithful Christians resisted unto blood these heresies, and the oppressing powers which the heretics suborned. The message to the church in Pergamos was: "I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's throne is, and that thou holdest fast my name, and didst not deny my faith, even in the days of Antipas, my witness, my

faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwelleth."

Let it then stand clearly and constantly before us that Christianity had to start upon its conquests with this array of false priests and false teachers already upon the field, and to be maintained and increased as the conflict went on. And it is the injustice of church history that much which should be charged only to its enemies, is entered in the account against Christianity itself.

Through the apostle John the Holy Spirit has given us this light with which to explore religious history: "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." And beside it the apostle Paul places this: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor." Hold this combined light to the faces that we pass in church history, and many a leader and many a so-called church is revealed as not of God, though such alone are recognized by the historian as Christ's representatives. The real Christians, if seen at all, are shown in the background as under the shadow of heresy, and to be coerced into fellowshiping the nominal religion.

True Christians have never been perfect in knowledge, belief, or conduct, but they have always had a Christ-like love for the good and true, and a Christ-like compassion for those whom they believed to be in the wrong and in evil doing. As compared

with the unregenerate, this has been the characteristic of the children of God at all times ; and could history show just how they have felt and acted in every age and situation, the fair-minded observer would never charge them with being the bigoted and oppressive people of their time. Hierarchs called Christians, allying with themselves tyrannical civil rulers, have inflicted cruel persecutions ; but Christ forbids such hierarchies to exist, or such alliances to be formed, or such oppression in any way to be practiced. And against it Christ's witnesses have always come forward, and borne costly testimony.

The apostle John appears to be the specially selected representative of this regenerate character in Christians. He has been called the apostle of love — not from his natural amiability alone ; for in temperament he was a “son of thunder,” and had a strong spirit of self-seeking ambition to combat, but because the new birth and the new life so transformed him into the likeness of the Master on whose bosom he leaned. ♡ In forming the first church he had, with Peter, a leading part in keeping out and in casting out those who betrayed the unregenerate spirit ; and through all the century with the duration of which his life was parallel, he stood thus guard at the door of “God's building.” So solemnly did they reject the first false professors, that it is said, “Of the rest, durst no man join himself unto them,” although the true converts continued to press in.

And again at Samaria they illustrated this faithful detective spirit in the case of Simon Magus, saying to him: "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right in the sight of God." And when in other churches the right to receive Gentile converts without circumcision was contested, John was one whom Paul called a pillar, supporting the principle that the Holy Spirit, in "purifying their hearts by faith," had qualified all alike for membership in the churches.

Banished by persecution to the island of Patmos, John had given to him by Christ the book of Revelation. In this tragic roll, whose seals were broken to him, the Commander in Zion counsels and encourages his true followers for their terrible conflicts in maintaining their loyalty to his cause. They were to stand for the living Christ and the living church while the sealing of the servants of God in their foreheads should go on. They who should come out of that great tribulation would be in robes washed white in the blood of the Lamb, and with palms of victory.

In his gospel, written later, as many believe, the aged apostle has, as the burden of his writing, spiritual life in Christ and gracious love in the brotherhood; and in his epistles, the last short messages which his withered, trembling hand could write, to Christians at large, and to two of his personal friends, the burden is the same: Regenerate life, regenerate love, regenerate righteousness of stand-

ing and of character. Life eternal, not as to duration but as to quality like God's—this God hath given unto us, and this is in his Son. Born of God and sinning not—not practicing sin—are all Christians.

With these principles so enforced throughout his long Christian life, the faithful John, on whom, as the last of the inspired corps, it devolved to dismiss the churches for their onward course with no more of such personal guidance, did not so dismiss them without distinct warnings of what they had to resist—the invasion of the unregenerate world in its seductions, its heresies, its persecutions. And it was in meeting and contending against these that those whom Christ made free, maintained and transmitted their freedom.

As the first century neared its end, some of the Jewish leaders sought to effect a compromise with the Christians. A class of these were the Ebionites, or poor people, who had been expelled from Judea by the Romans. They were willing to accept Christ as the Messiah, but denied that he was the "Word made flesh," and held him to be but as one of the old prophets endowed with miraculous powers. Against them John wrote: "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God." He that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God overcometh the world. Rejecting also

the work of the Holy Spirit, these leaders of the old priestly order ignored regeneration, and made the church to be a synagogue of Jewish form-doing.

The Gnostics, or "knowing ones" of eastern mysticism, also denied the incarnation and the atonement, and called forth from John the inspired certification: "That which we have seen with our eyes, and our hands handled concerning the Word, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us, that declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us." On the human breast of Jesus, he would say, this head of mine has rested, and felt the beat of his human heart; and he is the propitiation for our sins, "faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Then there were the Nicolaitans, whose antinomian heresy turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, claiming that because Christ died for our sins, which the law would have punished, we are not held to account for them, and may sin on in unconcern. "He that doeth sin is of the devil," was John's indignant retort; and "to this end the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin." "He that doeth righteousness is righteous," "even as he, Christ, is righteous."

Again there were what might be called the Swedenborgians of that day, whose hierarch was one Docetus, and gave his name to the sect. They dis-

solved the personality of Christ into mist, and made the Scriptures to be a crust which they could break, and find beneath it all fanciful meanings.

These false teachers not only sought to displace the truths of the gospel by their perversions of them, but to spy out privily the liberty which regenerate souls had in Christ Jesus, and bring them into bondage. And as Christianity spread, the Jewish and the Roman powers came more and more to substitute persecution for toleration, so that in the true people of God, the heroic element had no lack of development.

As a denomination, Baptists have ever been faithful to the principles and truths which thus early began to be assailed. In respect to ministerial qualifications, they have insisted upon godly experience and life in the candidate, and that in doctrine he show "uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity." It is questionable whether any great number of Christians ever was opposed to an educated ministry, solely because of the education; but this body of Christians has always made unyielding protest against the making of ministers by educating unconverted men.

When infant baptism and state establishments in religion had largely filled the pulpits of Christendom with ministers thus made, the Baptists of America instituted Christian educational work on the opposite principle, of aiding God-called ministers to add to their power of service, as Timothy and Apollos and Titus and their class were aided. We shall see

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in its place how this new movement in the educational world wrought deliverance from the civil disabilities which dissenters were suffering in all the schools of Christendom.

In respect to the spiritual qualification asked for of all who apply for church membership, and as to the order and form of church ordinances, the primitive law has been sacredly obeyed. The independence of the local church, "under law to Christ," has been respected, and personal religious freedom has been claimed for all, and extended to all.

Thus this denomination can claim brotherhood with the faithful of the first centuries, who contended earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints, "hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus," and in great numbers led forth the holy army of martyrs.

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE APOSTOLIC PERIOD TO THE IMPERIAL.

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.”

WHEN Christianity reached the position where her inspired pilots in person were dismissed, and she stood upon her course without such guidance, she had been furnished through the Scriptures with compass and chart, and had in the Holy Spirit the heavenly luminary, so that she could prosperously pursue her destined way. Her essential mission was not to fail. If at any point a worldly spirit came into command, and neglecting the requisite studies and observations, allowed her to fall upon a wrong course, she carried a better seamanship, ever ready to protest, and save from wreck. Accordingly we shall see how the spiritual life in the churches manifests itself as Christ and the apostles provided it should do. Find the true Christians of any period, and they will be heard proclaiming: “God is love, and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him,” and “if a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar.”

It has been charged that Christianity in its history represents God as unloving, and even malevolent; that he has arbitrarily reprobated his creatures to a fate outside the pale of his offered mercy; that he has consigned sinless infancy to eternal torment, and felicitated himself in the tortures of lost souls; and that he has upheld men in cruel persecutions of their brethren. But it can be seen that graceless or deluded hierarchies are responsible for these blasphemous defamations, and God's real children have always protested against them. Really, the persecutions charged upon Christianity came from outside it, though some dark-minded Christians may have implicated themselves in these persecutions. It is not a re-discovery by modern liberalists that God is what the apostle of love teaches that he is; nor has Christly love of brother men suffered any eclipse that was total in any century or land of Christianity.

Accordingly we shall find the real Christians in history saying with the apostles and their Lord: "Beloved, let us love one another;" "love as I have loved you." Usurpers of power, in the name of Christianity, have persecuted; but the spirit in true Christians has disowned the persecutions, however dearly they were made to pay for their protests. Of imperfection we shall find enough everywhere, but of preëminence in all that is good and that works good, the palm is easily theirs who are "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for

good works." That we test this truth from her history, is Christianity's challenge.¹

During the first and second centuries, the churches of Christ had become planted in nearly all the nations then known, and early in the third century they are found very numerous in parts of Asia, Europe, and Africa; and added to the Jewish persecutions, there had come upon them those of the Roman paganism. These, like the Jewish, were instigated by priestly jealousy and tyranny; for the civil power of Rome clothed itself in priestly arrogations, the kings and emperors themselves claiming to be the high priests of their idolatry. Both the pagan oppression, therefore, and the corrupted leadership in the churches, forced the faithful Christians into protests, and despoiled them of their liberties and their lives. Statements of the extent of this

¹ "The tyrannical oppression through which discoveries of truth and inventions in the arts have had to make their way, has been charged upon Christianity; but a thorough scrutiny of the lives of true Christians will show how unjust are such representations as appear in Professor Draper's "History of the Conflict between Religion and Science," or Hon. A. D. White's "War of Christianity and Science," and similar writings. "These sects, these heresies," says Guizot, speaking of those who stood out against the persecuting powers in the nominal church, "all these oppositions which arose, are the most decisive proof of the moral life and activity which reigned in Christianity."—*History of Civilization*, p. 119.

Let her be judged by these "sects and heresies," and not by the titled usurpers of her name.

suffering for religious freedom have been derived, which, it would seem, cannot be other than exaggerations; yet so cautious and thorough a student as Dr. J. Newton Brown does not discredit the record that, down to the time of Constantine, 312 A. D., "the number of martyrs has been computed at three million." And all of these, he claims, were in principle such Christians as are now called Baptists, except that Cyprian and his followers in Africa came, in the last half of the third century, to advocate infant baptism, retaining the form of immersion.*

Showing for what these martyrs suffered, and the great numbers of them, the celebrated report of Pliny to his superior, Trajan, is impressive evidence. He was proconsul in Bithynia and Pontus (A. D. 110) fifty-eight years after Paul "assayed to go" thither and introduce the gospel, "but the Spirit of Jesus suffered him not." Embarrassed with the prosecution of Christians in the province, he made investigation, and reported that "many of all ages, of every rank, and of both sexes, were involved in the liability; for the contagion of this superstition had seized not only cities, but villages and the open country. The temples [pagan] were destroyed, and victims for sacrifice rarely purchased." Of their character and practices he said: "They were in the custom of meeting together on a certain day, Sunday [not the Jewish seventh];

* "Baptist Martyrs," Prelim. (Essay).

that they united in a hymn of praise to their God, Christ, bound one another to refrain from crimes, to be faithful to all promises and trusts, and observed a simple and innocent meal."³ And yet he held himself bound to execute the ruthless Roman law, and put to death these harmless and beneficent people if they would not deny their faith, invoke the gods, offer incense before the image of the emperor, and curse Christ.

In like manner, fifty years later, in the neighboring province, under the reluctant hand of another proconsul, Pólycarp, the aged disciple of the apostle John, beloved pastor of the church in Smyrna, was informed against, and when arraigned he said: "I tell you frankly, I am a Christian, and if you would know what the doctrine of Christianity is, appoint me an hour, and hear me." When this confession had doomed him unheard to the stake, he was repeatedly urged by the proconsul to ascribe divine honor to the emperor, saying, "What harm can the words do?" And finally, to the temptation, "Curse Christ, and I will release you," he returned the memorable answer: "Six and eighty years have I served him, and he has done me nothing but good; how could I curse him, my Lord and Saviour?" and went and stood unbound at the stake, with prayer and thanks ascending, like Elijah, to heaven.

While this glorious army of martyrs was paying its installment of the purchase-price of religious

³ Neander, Vol 1, p. 97.

freedom, many nominal Christians yielded to the temptations to compromise with the world. Thus parties were formed on the fields where Christianity had become planted, and defenders of the Christian faith and church-life stood forth on the stage of passing events. By giving the story of some of these, with their following, we shall identify the heroes and the peoples who led in that primitive conflict for soul-liberty.

THE STORY OF TERTULLIAN.

Tertullian was of the Roman nobility, son of an officer of government who was stationed at Carthage, in Africa, born about the year 160 A. D. After the New Testament, his *Apologeticus* has been called the first published plea for religious liberty. He was educated a lawyer, and pursued this profession up to mature age. At his conversion he became a devoted exemplar, and earnest advocate of experimental Christianity. His voluminous writings, contained in our libraries, show in full delineation the character of a true Christian in that age. No writer has better set open to view the doors through which the world found its way into the church. He took his lessons in religious liberty from Christ and the apostles.

The reign of the Roman emperor, Severus Septimus, was one of the periods of greatest persecution, especially in Africa. Official tortures and murders the most ruthless and brutal were the fate of the

noblest characters, regardless of what might move the pity of savages. When the proconsul of Numidia offered deliverance to a body of his Christian subjects if they would worship the emperor, Speratus replied for them: "I have never failed to pay the custom upon all which I purchased, for I acknowledge the emperor as my lord; but I can *worship* none but my Lord, the King of kings." And then they all knelt, and their heads fell under the axe.

Of faithful women, accused of nothing but of being Christians, two in the church of Carthage were Perpetua and Felicitas, young mothers, one with her babe at her breast, the other giving birth to hers as she awaited execution. The pagan father of Perpetua, who dearly loved her, again and again pleaded with tears for their sake and the child's sake that she would yield, as the governor joined his entreaties and said: "Offer sacrifice for the welfare of the emperor." Her response was: "My father's gray hairs pained me;" and having pressed the child to her breast, and commended it to her mother, who was a Christian, she answered the governor: "That I cannot do! I am a Christian." To Felicitas the jailer said, in her pangs of maternity, "If the present sufferings are so great, what wilt thou do when thou art thrown to the wild beasts?" She answered: "There will be Another who will suffer for me, because I also will suffer for him." When torn to exhaustion by the hungry beasts, they kissed each other, and went to Him who

showed himself to Stephen as rising up to embrace his coming martyrs.

No wonder that the manly and godly lawyer, Tertullian, with such things going on at his door in Carthage, made the world hear his protests. Appealing to the proconsul, he says: "It is easily seen to be unjust to compel freemen against their will to offer sacrifices; for in acts of religious service a willing mind is required. It should be counted quite absurd for one man to compel another to do honor to the gods." And it provokes, he argues, defiance of the gods. Again he says: "It is a fundamental human right, a privilege of nature, that every man should worship according to his convictions."

The Roman emperors put themselves in the place of God. With this blasphemous assumption was the form of civil oaths made a swearing by the emperor, and offerings to him were required as to a god. The protest of Tertullian was: "I will assuredly call the emperor my lord, but in the common acceptation, wherein I am not forced to call him Lord in the place of God." As to such an ascription he says: "I am free of the emperor; for I have only one Lord, the Almighty and eternal God, the same who is also the emperor's Lord."

Such, at the cost of martyrdom, was the Christian position when philosophers, high in the honors of the world, were saying, as Celsus: "Why should it be a wrong thing to acquire favor with the rulers?

When it is required of you to swear by the emperor, there is nothing so mischievous in this." Because Christians saw something mischievous in it, the world to-day has enlightened liberty rather than pagan despotism.

As to pure and patriotic virtues, Tertullian claims : "Among us nothing is said or seen or heard which has anything in common with the madmen of the circus, the immodesty of the theater, the atrocities of the arena, or the useless exercises of the wrestling ground. We pray for the emperors, for their ministers, and for all in authority, for the welfare of the world, for the prevalence of peace. On the monthly collection day each, if he likes, puts in a donation. These gifts are piety's deposit fund. They are not taken thence and spent on feasts, drinking-bouts, and eating houses, but to support and bury poor people, to supply the wants of boys and girls destitute of means or parents, and old persons, such, too, as have suffered shipwreck, or are shut up in prisons for fidelity to the cause of God." His Christly challenge was : "What single case of revenge are you able to point to, though if we desired to avenge ourselves, would there be any lack in numbers? almost all the inhabitants of your various provinces being followers of Christ. No; this alone would be revenge enough for us, that you were saved." Says Neander : "Even their persecutors were never mentioned with resentment, but they prayed that God would forgive them," and when calamities came

upon the persecuting, Christians were foremost, or alone, in putting their lives at stake in aiding the sufferers. When terrific plagues broke out, and the pagans, philosophers and all, drove from them those suspected of infection, and fled from the cities, Christians in organized relief cared for the sick and buried the deserted dead, at whatever cost to their own lives.⁴

That Tertullian and the large body of the churches of his day represented the principles which distinguish Baptists, is further shown by his writings on baptism. His words are: "Concerning baptism, all who became believers used to be baptized. Then it was that Paul was baptized, when he believed. Delay of baptism in the case of little children is preferable. The Lord does indeed say, Forbid them not to come unto me. Let them come, then, while they are being taught whither to come; let them become Christians when they have become able to know Christ. Let them know how to ask for salvation." "If baptism is not so necessary [to save the child], why should the sponsors be thrust into danger of the development of an evil disposition in the child for whom they stood?"

The cause of these protests was that in Africa some of the pastors had come to teach that only the baptized are saved, and hence were immersing little children,—not infants, at first. This first appears a hundred years, at least, after the death of the apos-

⁴ Neander, Vol. 1, p. 258.

ties, infant baptism coming still later to be practiced. This, of course, made the little children to become members of the churches, and consistently the Lord's supper was administered to them. Children thus treated would not be likely afterward to experience conversion, as their position in the church gave them to understand that they were already Christians. This innovation in Africa opened the way to laxity of church discipline, and defections from evangelical doctrine, as illustrated in the great Arian heresy, whose source and seat were in Africa and the East. Tertullian's position, standing for a regenerate church membership, was therefore verified anew as vital to Christianity, and it proved, says Neander, "that the practice of infant baptism had not as yet come to be regarded as an apostolic institution."

THE STORY OF THE NOVATIANS AND DONATISTS.

At Rome Novatian took up the contention which Tertullian had maintained in Africa. Before his conversion he was a philosopher of eminent culture and abilities. As an elder in the church, he protested vigorously against receiving as members those who failed to give, or afterward discredited, evidences of regeneration. Overborne by the popular clergy, he led his followers in withdrawing and forming separate churches, called Cathari, or Puritans—the name and the party being similar to the churches thus characterized in England fourteen hundred years later. Mosheim says of them: "They considered

the Christian Church a society of innocent persons, who, from entering into it, had stained themselves with no greivous sin, and they regarded as undeserving the name of true churches of Christ those who opened the door for the return of gross offenders." They would pray and labor for the salvation of such, but held that the grounds of fellowship had been so impaired that the church must not suffer by their restoration to membership. Their principle as to church-membership was that of the New Testament, whether or not they erred in acting upon it.

Those who came to them from the popular churches they could receive only on baptism, and hence they incurred the odium of rebaptizing, afterward called anabaptism. These Novatian, or Purist, churches multiplied very extensively over Europe. Being excommunicated and execrated by "the leading prelates" whom history treats as "the church," they suffered persecution both from the Christian and pagan hierarchies, in exiles, in prisons, and in every form and atrocity of martyrdom.

An incident in Novatian's life shows what strength the ruinous heresy of salvation through baptism was gaining in the popular churches. He was converted out of a state of great mental excitement which was followed by a supposed fatal sickness; and lest he should be lost for lack of baptism, the church leaders tried to substitute for immersion the diffusing of water over his body, while he probably was unconscious—an instance of what has so often and blindly hur-

ried the clergy to death-beds with the so-called sacraments.⁵ This is believed to be the first instance of an attempt to change the form of the act in baptizing, and it was so discredited as to prevent Novatian's election to the office of bishop.

Donatus is the last leader in defense of Bible principles whom we select from this period. These men are not presented as the only ones of like spirit in the churches, but as representing those who stood forth as leaders and organizers of such as protested against the defections. They are the heroes who stepped forth, and led forth, to meet the hierarchs. Thus Donatus gave form and name to the large body of Donatists so long seen in the early church history. He was of Carthage, in Africa, a successor of Tertullian, described by a writer as of great eloquence, as unbending as Martin Luther, and as fiery as John Knox. He repeated in Africa the work of Novatian in Europe. He was elected an independent bishop by those who seceded from the ruling church, and the churches of his sect became very numerous. Mosheim says that they came to number as many as four hundred pastors. They disowned the nominal church of history, as having become an organization of the world, through infant baptism, laxity of discipline, and priestly rule.

⁵Note the case of a brutal prize-fighter shot in a saloon quarrel in Chicago, and the cry: "A priest! a priest!" drowning even the call for a physician.

Their contention was for a regenerate church membership and an unworldly life.

And the principles of religious freedom, personal and ecclesiastical, with which their field had been so well seeded by Tertullian, were in full growth among the Donatists. Outside of these protesting bodies, the bishops and churches were in councils passing conformity decrees, and trying to coerce submission to them. They were also in alliance with the civil rulers of Rome, whose idolatry was forced upon all subjects of the empire. Hence the dissenting Christians were between the upper and nether millstones of ecclesiastical tyranny and pagan despotism. Rather, the time was at hand when these crushing powers were to be consolidated, and to fall on the adherents of the purer faith. Constantine the emperor is represented as becoming a Christian; but his reckless ambition left him still the murderer of his rivals and kindred, and the betrayer of his allies; and, while putting the cross upon the shields of his soldiers, he put the sword to the service of the church, which he made the national one. The Puritans were condemned and executed, the emperor proclaiming them heretics, and his Christian hierarchy leading on the persecution. Experience, however, tempered somewhat this imperial policy.

The Donatists were not perfect in character or policy. In resisting their cruel oppressors they were implicated, how far justly we may not judge, in the

lawless violence of fanatical bandits that took their side, and courted the honor of martyrdom ; but if we look for Christian principle and life, we shall best find it in these sufferers. Hear them on religious liberty : " What has the emperor to do with the church ? " said Donatus, when governmental money was offered his followers if they would return to the state church ; and he charged them against receiving any such governmental aid. " Why," they said, " do you not permit every man to follow his own free will, since the Lord himself has bestowed this free will on man ? " " Christ persecutes no one. " " Christ sent fishermen, not soldiers, to preach his faith. " " Did the apostles ever persecute any one ? "

Mark their pure and beneficent life. It is recorded that they sought to dissuade the rough bandits from taking vengeance on their persecutors, saying, " Christ teaches us to suffer wrong, not requite it," and they even invoked the civil power to restrain these avengers.

In such teachers and their followers we must see the truest pastors and churches, rather than in those to whom history accords its honors — as, later the courtly Augustine, of marked conversion, generous Christian spirit, and distinguished labors, but allied with a state church, and upholding its oppressions. Of him Neander has well said : " It was by Augustine that a theory was proposed and founded, which, tempered though it was in its practical application by his own pious, philanthropic spirit, nevertheless

contained the germ of that whole system of spiritual despotism, of intolerance and persecution, which ended in the tribunals of the Inquisition."

Never to this theory have Baptists been found assenting. They stand clearly allied with its opposers, whom we have now traced through three hundred years from the time of Christ's ministry,—the churches formed and guarded by the apostles; the heroic leadership and following of those who learned the way of the Lord from the apostles; and their faithful successors, represented by the names we have selected from the history of the period.

The lesson of this history is that regenerate piety is an unwasting, effectual salt; that it preserves a pure church and free soul; and that it demands constitutional liberty in civil government. Honored of men at last, and blessed of God ever, is a history that has brought through the centuries these principles and this life.

CHAPTER IV.

VOICES OF THE NIGHT.

“And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God.”

FROM the time when, under the emperor Constantine, 312 A. D., Christianity was made the state religion throughout the Roman empire, the vital religion of Christ went under eclipse, and a thousand years were to measure the obscuraton. “The light of the world” was still in the world, but the luminous body, the church of the regenerate, was veiled to earthly view. Hence this period, more or less entire, is called, most justly in its religious aspect, the Dark Ages. In all other respects the darkness was a felt and deadly one; but the cause of all was the shutting off of heaven’s light. “If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness.”

Through even more than this long period, that which appears and moves across the field of Christian history as the church, is the baptized world under a worldly management, which on the whole may justly be characterized as priestcraft and statecraft combined. Occasionally a faithful bishop in connection with the established system would assert

and try to carry out the spirituality, and separateness from the world, of Christ's kingdom—as Chrysostom,—but he would be overborne, and have his life worried out in the condemnations and banishments with which he was pursued.

Emperors, still pagan in character, helped to constitute the hydra-head of the religious establishment. The will of Christ was no longer the law, the truth of Christ was no longer the doctrine, the life of Christ was no longer the soul, in the gross encroachment called his church. Says Doctor John Lord in his able lectures: “The clergy, no longer supported by voluntary gifts of the disciples but by the wealth of the temples, became lazy, arrogant, and independent. The people were shut out from the government of the church, and religious dogmas were enforced by the sword. An imposing hierarchy, culminating in a pope, decided doctrines, and compelled assent as dictated by the emperor.” The infidel Hobbs, of England, says: “Papal Rome is but the ghost of the olden Roman paganism, sitting crowned on the sepulcher.”

Yet, as in Elijah's time, there were the hundreds who bowed not the knee in the state idolatry, and who carried on through the death-darkness their regenerate life. But little of their outshining is permitted to reach the eye of readers of history; and what these faithful had to encounter from the faithless, or from those whose faith was subsidized by the world, not themselves are allowed to tell us, for

their writings were destroyed. Grievously enough, however, is it learned of their enemies. Their "great fight of afflictions" for religious liberty was incessant through the weary centuries.

In the council of Carthage, 411 A. D., the imperial legate presiding, two hundred and eighty-six bishops decreed, against two hundred and seventy-nine Donatists who were members: "We will that whosoever denies that little children by baptism are freed from perdition and eternally saved, they be accursed." And two years later the emperor Honorius issued an edict forbidding, under penalty of death, the rebaptism, or, as the dissenters claimed, the baptism, of converts, thus throughout the empire making fast with his seal the shut doors into the pure churches.¹ These bodies of true Christians were therefore scattered and slain. "The woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."

Many of the heroes and their faithful followers in this church in the wilderness are brought into partial view by their persecutors, but depicted, of course, as bitter enemies desired. As the cries of the night-watch, let us hear their voices.

Jovinian of Rome, about 400 A. D., is called by Neander "the Protestant of his time." He shows, however, that the distinction was not Jovinian's

¹ Dr. J. Newton Brown, in "Baptist Martyrs," p. 15; Neander, Vol. II, p. 201.

alone. Unmarried and monkish life had become the rage with those who would be counted most religious. Out of the form of that life itself came Jovinian as the reprover of its spirit and assumptions. He insisted that the church, as the body of the regenerate children of God, is for all true members the highest type of life. Single or in family, social or secluded, every Christian is to have his right of choice honored, and his equality in rank acknowledged. His contention, therefore, was for a pure church, with soul-freedom the common right of its members. "They are all taught of God," he emphasized. "No person can break into their inclosure by violence, or creep in by fraud." "All have the same calling, the same dignity, the same heavenly blessings."

For these peaceable avowals of Bible principle, the noble reformer was denounced and banished by the Roman bishop. Fleeing to Milan, he hoped for better treatment from the distinguished Ambrose, but this hierarch joined in the chase of the worried sheep. Jovinian and his followers were driven into more distant exile, warnings being sent ahead of them, and thus the field of popular church history was cleared of their further appearance, though under other names their principles emerged.

Historians trace the continued maintenance of the claim for Christian freedom in religion through the succeeding centuries by persecuted parties of different names, or to whose names no place was allowed

in the dominant history. The popes of Rome, with opposition from different seats of a similar prelatie usurpation, came to control the current religion, and to bury in oblivion if they could all who disputed their authority.

The breaking up of the Roman empire and the ceaseless contentions of emperors, popes, and warriors throughout Europe, fill the pages of history through the middle ages. These contentions among the rulers at times left unmolested the bodies of true Christians in their realms, and occasionally a gleam of justice would shine out from the throne of an emperor or a bishop, or even a pope; as when, to the persecuting church, Theodoric, the Gothic conqueror of Rome, said — throwing forward the great principle over a thousand years of its bloody denials — “You have no right to punish save for the disturbances of the public peace; to pretend to a dominion over the conscience is to usurp the prerogative of God.”

One stream, however, of evangelical Christian life in this period was so remarkable in its rise and flow as to make for itself a clearly seen and large place on the turbulent surface of the times.

THE STORY OF PETER WALDO.

A peculiar people came to bear the name of this one of their leaders, but they did not originate with him, and other names distinguished them in different places and times: as Albigenses, from the name

of the town Albi ; Vaudois, people of the valleys ; or Poor Men of Lyons, from that French city. Neander says : " It was not without some foundation of truth that the Waldenses asserted the high antiquity of their sect, and maintained that from the time of the secularization of the church, such an opposition to its worldliness had existed all along " as was at length arrayed under their name. " They were a link in the chain of reactions, running through the whole period of reactions of the Christian consciousness against the churchly theocratic system of the middle ages. " And he calls them the purest link in the chain.

Peter Waldo was a wealthy citizen of Lyons, in the south of France, who came into historic view about the year 1170. He was in a convivial assembly with his fashionable friends, when one of the company suddenly died. The solemn event found in Waldo one who was ready to entertain its lessons. He resolved to turn from his worldly life, and be a Christian. An experimental faith caused in him old things to pass away, and all things to become new. He consecrated his personal life and all his property to Christian work. He hired scholars to put into the written language of the people translations, first of the gospels, then of other portions of the Bible, until at length the word of God was in multiplied manuscript copies circulated for common reading. He himself became an unofficial reader and preacher of Bible truth, accompanying his work with large

charities to the poor ; and he organized for such work throughout the country the Christians under his influence.

The nominal bishops condemned and prohibited these evangelical labors, but the laborers said : " We ought to obey God rather than man," and persisted in their work. The bishops resorted to violence, and the Christians appealed to the pope at Rome. Waldo and others sent a delegation to Pope Alexander III, carrying a copy of the translated Bible, and asking his approval of its circulation and of the connected evangelical labors. The pope convened a council to meet the delegation, and consider their request. There is to-day a manuscript in the library at Oxford, England, over six hundred years old, containing the report of that consultation. It was written by one Walter Mapes, a monk from England, who was present as a representative. He was on a committee to which the Waldensian delegates, with their Bible and evangelism, were referred for examination. He says that they found them " going about two by two, in plain apparel, and with a common purse, like the apostles and Jesus ;" that they had little of the learned fooleries of the school-men, but much knowledge of the Bible. But says this papal monk, " Had we suffered them to gain a firm footing, we should have been driven out ourselves." The pope condemned them, ordering them to stop preaching.

Of their character another papal writer says :

“Among all the sects which have hitherto existed, there has been none more pernicious to the church than the Waldenses, because they are universally spread ; and, while others repel by the blasphemous character of their doctrines, the Waldenses are quite orthodox, lead a pious life before men, are orderly and modest in their manners, eschew oaths, falsehood, and fraud, live on their own earnings, are chaste, never found hanging about wine shops, attend no balls or other vanities, govern their passions, and are always at work.” Of the tavern they say : “It is the fountain of sin, the school of the devil,” —most pernicious surely they were to such a “church” as the hypocritical Roman. Neander remarks : “As the origin of the Waldenses is to be traced to the reading of the Bible, they always remained true to this distinction.” Men and women were noted for scriptural knowledge, in contrast with the ignorance of even the clergy in the nominal churches. It is recorded of them : “All could read and write ;” “civil obedience was with them a point of conscience.”

In purity of doctrinal belief, hundreds of years before Luther, they insisted on “justification through the merits of Christ,” thought confession to a priest of no account, rejected the doctrine of purgatory and the necessity of consecrated burial grounds, and regarded as idolatry the worship of the virgin and of pictures. They arraigned the nominal church as Antichrist for putting its authority and a dead faith

in the place of Christ's grace and righteousness, and baptizing children to regenerate them. They said that "visible baptism makes no one either good or bad, but is an enrollment among believing Christians," insisting upon a church-membership of the regenerate only. Thus the Bible principles held and suffered for by them are identical with those of Baptists. By their labors in circulating the Scriptures and teaching and preaching the Lord Jesus, the Waldenses multiplied themselves all over Europe. They adopted every lawful form of labor and business for the purpose of traveling and sojourning on self-support to extend the gospel. Some of them became peddlers of ornaments for the rich, that they might quietly leave the word of life in such homes. A picture of this Whittier has wrought in verse. A Waldensian salesman having shown at a house his jewelry, and being asked if he has anything more, replies : —

“ ‘O lady fair, I have yet a gem
Which a purer luster flings
Than the diamond flash of the jeweled crown
On the lofty brow of kings,—
A wonderful pearl of exceeding price,
Whose virtues shall not decay,
Whose light shall be as a spell to thee,
And a blessing on thy way.’

“ Then the cloud went off the pilgrim's brow
As a small and meager book,
Unchased with gold or gem of cost,
From his folding robe he took.

'Here, lady fair, is the pearl of price ;
May it prove as such to thee,—
Nay, keep thy gold : I ask it not,
For the Word of God is free.' ”

And now see the hierarchs of proud and graceless form-doing in religion turn loose their hunters and hounds to pursue to their death these harmless and beneficent servants of the Lord Jesus,—the heroic keepers of the faith. It was not Christianity that was persecuting ; it was the world persecuting Christianity, just as Jesus forewarned : “ Because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you ; ” “ and ye know that it hated me before it hated you. ” The same world, led by just such priestcraft and statecraft as hunted down and crucified Christ, waged its relentless war on the Christ-like through the Christian centuries. We may admit that there were ecclesiastics blind enough to think they were doing God service, but their treatment ran to enormities as great as if the fiends of hell had been turned loose into those valleys.

It is scarcely possible to believe the records of torture and murder which these Christians suffered, century after century. It is impossible to describe the horrors. Men are reported to have been skinned alive, and women to have been treated worse. Whole communities would be at midnight driven to fly into the snow-filled recesses of mountains, where scores of frozen babes and mothers would be found at

daylight. Known assassins were promised impunity if they would charge their crimes upon Christian pastors. Thousands on thousands died in prisons. A writer exclaims: "Every rock and valley of Piedmont cries aloud with a terrible voice of agony to God for vengeance."

So late as the time of Oliver Cromwell in England, the middle of the seventeenth century, these horrible persecutions were still going on in Italy, under Pope Innocent (?) X and King Charles Immanuel (?) II. And it is among the high honors of Cromwell that he powerfully protested, through his ambassador, to the king; that he personally contributed ten thousand dollars for the relief of the sufferers; that he offered them a home in Ireland, and interceded with most of the sovereigns of Europe in their behalf. In this Cromwell was accompanied, if not led, by his secretary of state, John Milton, the immortal poet and the powerful Baptist advocate, with whom Roger Williams was in friendly association. This sympathy and righteous indignation in Milton accounts for his sublime appeal to the justice of God in the sonnet so often made to voice prayer for the oppressed:—

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold,—
Even them who kept thy faith so pure of old
When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones.
Forget not! In thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled

Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven,— their martyred blood and ashes sown
O'er all the Italian fields, where still shall grow
A hundred fold, who, having learned thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe."

As all copies of the Scriptures were searched for and burned by the persecutors, the Waldenses committed whole books to memory. A Catholic writer says: I have seen an "illiterate peasant who had learned by heart the book of Job, and several others who had committed to memory the entire New Testament." It was required of their pastors thus to learn most parts of the New Testament. The Bible, only, as a supreme authority in faith and practice, was their inflexible principle, and the right of each individual to interpret it for himself.

Persecution scattered these people with their principles throughout Europe. It is claimed in their behalf that the movement in England in the fourteenth century, headed by John Wycliffe, was started by sparks flying from the stake-fires in Italy and France. Remarkably after the manner of Peter Waldo, two hundred years before, did Wycliffe consecrate himself to giving the Bible in written translations into the English tongue to all who could thus read it.

The Waldenses still live. Communities of them in the valleys of Italy, Switzerland, and Germany bear their ancient name, and maintain their church

organization. Having somewhere along their course adopted infant baptism and the Romish form of the rite, they show inconsistently with their still avowed principle, that the Bible alone is the standard to which Christian and church belief and life must conform. They still maintain vigorously the work of circulating the Scriptures. And says a writer: "Their purity of life and faith contrasts favorably with the defections and religious deadness of the French, German, and Swiss Protestants. Their firm endurance of more terrible persecutions than any other Christians in ancient or modern times have been called to suffer," make them immortal witnesses of the immortal life which Jesus gives to those who experimentally come to him.

On this prolific vine there were branches and runners whose fruit bore different names, and continued to be produced in the succeeding period, as we shall see. The Paulicians, so persistent through many centuries, had some principles in common with the Albigenses and Waldenses, and suffered with them in untold numbers, a hundred thousand being put to death by the sword, the gibbet, or the flames in fourteen years, under the Empress Theodora. The Petrobrusians and Henricians, arising under the names and influence of these two powerful leaders, filled southern France with an evangelical following that maintained at the common cost of suffering and death, the contention for religious liberty. Peter of Bruys was burned at the stake, and Henry of Lau-

sanne languished in prison for life. Arnold of Brescia, in Italy, also belongs with the heroes who did valiant and telling battle with the hierarchs. He opposed a converted and godly life and a powerful persuading against the priestly usurpations, and even compelled the pope at Rome to yield for a few years his allied temporal power, and content himself with lordship in the church. But other powers that were, turned upon the reformers; he was hanged, his body burned, and the ashes thrown into the Tiber.

“He spoke, and Italy arose,
Thrilled by her prophet’s tongue of flame;
Religion triumphed o’er her foes,
And freedom sung her Arnold’s name.

“But ah, the martyr’s voice was hushed,
His ashes strewed the Tiber’s flood;
Truth, Freedom, Right, by power were crushed,
And Rome was drunk with holy blood.”

—*J. Newton Brown.*

That the Waldenses and other evangelical bodies who carried this holy war for freedom through the Dark Ages were of the regenerate character, and held other of the Bible principles for which Baptists stand, is the conclusive testimony of history. In 1819, two learned theologians and teachers in Holland, pedobaptists of the Dutch Reformed Church, were ordered by the king to prepare for the government use a history of the Dutch Baptists.

The result of their labor was summed up as follows:—

"The Mennonites are descended from the tolerably pure evangelical Waldenses, who were driven by persecution into various countries, and who, during the latter part of the twelfth century, fled into Flanders and into the provinces of Holland and Zealand, where they lived simple and exemplary lives, in the villages as farmers, in the towns as traders, free from the charge of any gross immoralities, and professing the most pure and simple principles, which they exemplified in a holy conversation. They were therefore in existence long before the Reformed Church of the Netherlands."

And the report concludes : —

"We have now seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called Anabaptists, and in later times Mennonites, were the original Waldenses, and have long in the history of the church received the honor of that origin. On this account the Baptists may be considered as the only Christian community which has stood since the days of the apostles, and as a Christian society which has preserved pure the doctrines of the gospel through all ages. The perfectly correct external and internal economy of the Baptist denomination tends to confirm the truth, disputed by the Roman Church, that the Reformation brought about in the sixteenth century was in the highest degree necessary, and at the same time goes to refute the erroneous notion of the Catholics that their communion is the most ancient."

Contrary to what is true in surveying natural scenery, the field of mediæval history shows the valleys lighted, and the mountain summits shrouded in darkness. Prelates and popes and monkish orders, leagued with tyrannical political powers, lift their heads over the vista, full often like the head of the cobra, hooded in malice. But the true people of God, "the many thousands of Israel," dwelling in their vales, made them luminous with pureness of heart and beneficence of life.

CHAPTER V.

HERALDS OF THE MORNING.

“The watchman said : The morning cometh, and also the night.”

DEPARTING night has its morning star, and inspires its voices to clearer and more joyous heralding. In the fourteenth century learning had begun to revive. Universities and society schools had been established. The labor of book-making with the pen was more widely diffused, and the “theologic cramp” employed in repressing religious freedom, became more generally irksome. These features of the age we shall see impersonated first and most strongly if we call up a great Englishman of five hundred years ago.

THE STORY OF JOHN WYCLIFFE.

He lived and died a Roman Catholic in church connection, because that was the established church in England, and because he had influence and friends of enough rank and power to disable the church from putting him to death ; but his principles and his amazing life-work were fearlessly against the corruptions and oppressions of the hierarchy.

At the middle of the century he had graduated at Oxford, and occupied the high position of head of

its theological faculty. He is believed also to have been a member of Parliament, where he led in resisting the many exactions of the pope. In his preaching as rector and in his many circulated writings, he boldly proclaimed that "a papal decree has no validity except so far as it is founded on the Scriptures;" insisted that churchly powers should not interfere with civil and personal rights; and affirmed that in the primitive church there were only the two simple and local ministers. As to ordinances, says Dr. Vaughn, "John de Wycliffe thought that the value of a sacrament must depend wholly on the mind of the recipient, not at all on the external act performed by the priest, and that infant salvation was not dependent on infant baptism." Thus were involved in his doctrine a spiritual church membership, and the free exercise of the believers' will in religious matters,—the Scriptural and denominational principles whose long struggle for victory over hierarchical domination we are tracing.

These principles fearlessly avowed and powerfully advocated by Wycliffe were enough to enrage the papacy and draw its fire. Numerous bulls were fulminated against the reformer, and he was summoned to Rome for trial, and of course condemned, and his voice and writings put under ban; but his king and titled friends, and the people at large, stood around him as an effectual shield against bodily martyrdom. Years after his burial the underlying spite against his work and influence decreed

and perpetrated the robbing of his grave and burning of its relics, with all that could be seized of his writings, throwing the ashes into the stream that ran through his parish. And thus, says the historian Thomas Fuller, "this brook has conveyed his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean ; so the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over."

But the greatest work for spiritual emancipation wrought by Wycliffe was in doing for the English-reading world what Waldo did for the French,—translating and circulating the Bible. It is now five hundred and twenty-five years since, from his long-toiling hand and lavish purse, this supreme boon was given to our race in our mother tongue. Nearly a century it had yet to wait before the art of printing came to put it in easily accessible volumes, but the manuscripts were multiplied by loving or hired hands, and greedily sought and used wherever, on island or continent, the language was spoken. In this was Wycliffe's magnitude as "the Morning Star of the Reformation." Under God he not only preceded, but brought the Sun to shine upon, the English world that was, and that was to be. As the morning beams flew swiftly abroad, the nation, and the nations, wakened. Men were burned for reading these translations, but the stake fires were lights in which more readers seized the books, and read on.

Of the wonderful diffusion, preservation, and in-

fluence of this translation, Dr. R. S. Storrs has said : —

“ Nearly or quite a hundred and fifty manuscripts remain, in whole or in part, written on vellum with elaborate care, to be the possession of churches or the wealthy, not a few bearing the marks of long use and the concealments into which they were hurried in times of trouble. All these were written within forty years after Wycliffe's death. And if we remember what careful, destructive search for them was made in the days of persecution, how many were borne across the sea, how many shriveled in the fires of war, how many were burned, with those who had read them, on public squares, how many probably wait to be discovered, we shall see how extraordinary their number at the first must have been. Only a spirit intense and determined could have driven so swiftly so many pens. How vast the impression produced by the version which thus burst into use, on language, on life in the whole sphere of moral, social, spiritual, even political experience, who shall declare ? ”

Says Sechler : “ It marks an epoch in the development of the English language almost as much as Luther's translation does in the history of the German tongues.” “ Chief of the reformers before the Reformation,” “ the progenitor and prototype of the Puritans,” are other characterizations of this master in Israel. To be identified in principle with such a leader, and to be his successors in the great strife which he left to be fought out, are an honor and trust high and sacred.

The new evangelical movement in England did not stop with Wycliffe's death. Those who had become enlisted in it came, for some unknown reason,

to be called Lollards. They carried on the circulation of the Scriptures and the writings of their leaders. Preachers were converted, and their churches became seats of revival. Traveling evangelists, as with the Waldenses, scattered the word of God, and showed unto the people the way of salvation. A Romanist writer complained that half of the people had become disaffected toward the church. But the repressed wrath of the persecutors found a place to break forth. The papal power procured a statute for burning heretics, and the fires were kept fiercely aglow. "Multitudes were ruthlessly hurried to the flames or floods." A hundred dreary years pass away, when, as the Reformation approaches, estrangements between England and Rome left the servants of God less molested. Says Dr. Storrs: "The fatal laws against Wycliffe's adherents fell dead; it was the time for which his quickening thought had waited, and having brooded silent in the air, it then burst into voice, as if touching a thousand souls at once." Such was the preparation by the word of God and by the seed of martyr blood, for the Reformation, and such its welcome.

THE STORY OF JOHN HUSS.

The signal gun in England was answered by one in central Europe. The sublime faith of Wycliffe was realized: "I am assured that the truth of the gospel may indeed for a time be cast down in particular places, and may for awhile abide in silence in

consequence of the threats of Antichrist, but extinguished it can never be ; for the Truth itself has said, Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall never pass."

The Waldenses, scattered as we have seen throughout the continent, are reported as eighty thousand in Bohemia before the dawn of the Reformation. The revival of learning established the University of Prague ; and here, in 1393, eleven years after Wycliffe's death, graduated John Huss. In the library there, "in a copy of the missal containing the old Hussite liturgy, richly illuminated by loving hands, Wycliffe is pictured at the top, lighting a spark ; Huss below him, blowing it into a flame ; Luther still lower, waving on high the lighted torch. It is a true picture of that succession in which others followed with brightening luster this 'Morning Star of the Reformation,' till the sky was glowing through all its arch with the radiance of the upspringing light."¹

In the university life of Huss, where he became a teacher, and was promoted to the head of the theological faculty, as Wycliffe was at Oxford, the works of Wycliffe fell into his hands, and received his delighted study and embrace. He became an ardent preacher and disseminator in writings of the reformed doctrines. He proclaimed, says Professor Fisher, "that no authority is final except that of the Scriptures." "His words and his life manifested a heartfelt zeal for practical holiness, and he propounded a

¹ R. S. Storrs, "Five-hundredth Anniversary."

lofty conception of the functions and duties of the clergy. In these characteristics Huss was not excelled by any ecclesiastical reformer before or since." He was the adviser of the queen, and in great favor with all except the papal hierarchy and those whom it enslaved. His teachings and life could not but commit him to spirituality in the church and full religious freedom for all. He said: "We ought to read the books of heretics, not burn them, lest they contain something of truth." And this he said when all the precious writings that could be hunted up,—Wycliffe's, his own, and others,—were being thrown into bonfires, and his person was doomed to the same fate. Of his followers, "a letter written to Erasmus from Bohemia states, 'They admit none until they are dipped in water, and they reckon one another, without distinction in rank, to be called brothers and sisters.'"

Not daring to try such men for heresy in their own country, the pope ordered him to a council at Constance, where the emperor assured him of safe guarding, and he was led to believe freedom of speech would be granted him; but he found himself thrown at once into prison, where for months he lay, denied any hearing in the council, or any utterance save in denial of his principles to committees sent to him to force this. There, July 6, 1415, he went forth to the stake, calmly avowing "the rights of conscience as against the edicts of popes and councils." Kneeling by the crackling fire, and praying to Jesus, just

as holy Stephen knelt and prayed, his spirit went up in the flame into the opened heaven, and the mortal ashes were gathered up and thrown into the Rhine, to mingle with Wycliffe's in the same ocean, symbolic of their joint influence on all nations of men. Once more the contest of hero and hierarchs was over, and, though a martyr fell, freedom was advanced toward its costly victory.

JEROME OF PRAGUE.

This name belongs in the story of Huss. Of the same city, at the same day, they were loving friends in the University, and in their Christian experience, sentiments, and labors. He became a man of extensive learning, spending periods of study at the universities of Prague, Paris, Heidelberg, Cologne, and Oxford. He was employed by the king of Poland to organize the University of Cracow. Though a layman, he held discussions on the questions in religion, advocating with great ability reforms in the church, and the doctrinal views which Wycliffe and Huss had advanced. Such a discussion with the chancellor of the University of Paris gave him wide notoriety. He suffered imprisonment at Vienna for his reform efforts, and was released only through the strong intercessions of his Bohemian friends.

Learning of the danger into which Huss had fallen at Constance, he hastened thither to defend him, but was obliged to fly from threatened violence. Obtaining, as he supposed, a safe conduct, he was return-

ing to the aid of his friend, when he was seized and put in the power of the council as a prisoner. After several attempts to condemn him in the council, in one session of which he made a qualified recantation, he finally solemnly retracted all admission of error, and was hurried to the same stake where Huss had suffered, and met his fate with most impressive courage.

A long and admiring description of his defences before the council, and of his death, is given by the secretary of the pope. Calling him the Bohemian heretic, he says : —

“It was amazing to hear with what force of expression, with what fluency of language, and with what excellent reasoning, he answered his adversaries. Nor was I less struck with the gracefulness of his manner, the dignity of his action, and the firmness and constancy of his whole behavior. It grieved me to think so great a man was laboring under so atrocious an accusation. He began his defence with prayer to God, whose assistance he pathetically implored. He then referred to profane history, — unjust sentences given against Socrates, Plato, Anaxagoras ; and next to Scripture, exhibiting the sufferings of the worthies. Then he dwelt on the merits of the cause pending, resting entirely on the credit of witnesses who avowedly hated him. And here his appeal made a strong impression upon the minds of his hearers, and not a little shook the credit of the witnesses. He had been confined almost a year in a dungeon, of which he complained, but in the language of a great and good man. In this horrid place he was deprived of books and papers, yet notwithstanding this, and the constant anxiety which must have hung over him, he was at no loss for proper authorities and quotations. The greatest character in ancient story could not possibly go beyond him.

Two days were allowed him for reflection, during which time many persons of consequence, and particularly my lord cardinal of Florence, endeavored to bring him to a better mind. But persisting obstinately in his errors, he was condemned as a heretic. With a cheerful countenance, and more than stoical constancy, he met his fate. When he came to the place, he pulled off his upper garment, and made a short prayer at the stake, to which he was bound with wet cords and an iron chain, and inclosed as high as his breast in fagots. Observing the executioner about to set fire to the wood behind his back, he cried out, 'Bring thy torch hither; perform thy office before my face. Had I feared death, I might have avoided it.' As the wood began to blaze, he sang a hymn, which the violence of the flames scarcely interrupted. Thus died this prodigious man. I was myself a witness of his whole behavior. Whatever his life may have been, his death is a noble lesson."²

Orchard's history states that he was baptized by immersion, as was still the common practice, and after his adult experience. His being of the followers of Huss would imply as much. Thus continues the line of those who have counted not their lives dear unto themselves in the struggle to maintain a Bible church and a Bible life.

Other names of those who preceded Luther might be added, and other classes of followers, allied to these in character; but we pass to the succeeding period.

² "Baptist Martyrs," p. 44.

CHAPTER VI.


THE STORY OF THE ANABAPTISTS.

“The Baptist party, whose trophy from the first was freedom of conscience, unlimited freedom of mind, was trodden under foot with foul reproaches and most arrogant scorn, and its history is written in the blood of myriads of the German peasantry; but its principles, safe in their immortality, escaped with Roger Williams to Providence, and his colony is the witness that naturally the paths of the Baptists are paths of freedom.” — *Bancroft*.

THE distinguished historian, not himself a Baptist, has here left on record the testimony which candid and thorough study of the period of the Reformation compels. It is a prejudiced and false representation which many writers allow themselves to make when they stigmatize the Anabaptists as “numerous licentious and fanatical sectaries, whose excesses afforded a plausible pretext for punishing ;” or impute to them “the wild excesses of the Communists at Munster.” Thomas Münzer, one of the leaders of reform in Germany, who was borne on into revolutionary and criminal acts, was never an Anabaptist. He remained in the Romish Church, and received its sacrament at his beheading. As his platform of reform embraced the principles for

which Baptists had always contended, together with errors of which they were free, and as they were suffering intolerable oppressions, it was natural that some of them should become enlisted with him, and be implicated in wrongs of which personally they would have been innocent ; as at all times good men are liable to become involved in wrong-doing under leaders with whom they are in sympathy.

“Anabaptist” meant simply a Christian whose belief and obedience placed baptism after conversion, irrespective of what had been done under that name to the person in his infancy,—just as “Jesus made and baptized” disciples. Of these Christians, great numbers had been journeying down the centuries in different parts of Europe. The heralding of the Reformation found them hidden in the recesses of their lands, repressed and preyed upon by the endless succession of their churchly persecutors. Hailing with joy and praise the glad signals, they sprang forth to aid wherever they could the breaking of the oppressor’s arm ; and in the great and long conflict, they were in the front line on the Lord’s side, and met the deadliest resistance. The banner given by the Lord to them that feared him, to be displayed because of the truth, bore this inscription :—“The Bible, only, the religion of Protestants.” Those who were Baptist in principle and life were the only people prepared of the Lord to receive this banner, and never allow it to be lowered. Luther and Zwingle and others, in combating the



papal corruptions, claimed to stand solely upon the word of God ; but their attempt to apply this principle was only partial. It was said of them at the time, with cutting truth and justice, that when arguing against the papists, they took the Baptist position ; but when arguing against the Baptists, they went over to the Romish position. Hubmeier, the Swiss Baptist, expostulates with his friend Zwingle thus : " You said in opposition to Faber that all truth is clearly revealed in the word of God. If now infant baptism is a truth, show us the scripture in which it is found. If you do not, the vicar will complain that you have used against him a sword which you now lay aside." The Lutheran Church even formally decreed that " the natural meaning of Scripture is what the three creeds, the Apostles', that of Nicea, and that of Athanasius, interpret it to be," and allowed no one to carry an appeal past those creeds up to the Bible. Hence the Anabaptists, disappointed of religious liberty under the policy of the leading reformers, came instead to be persecuted by them ; and so, between the front-fire of the Catholics and the cross-fire of the dominant Protestants, those who stood faithfully for the Bible only had their fate aggravated rather than relieved.

The story of their sufferings from the time that Luther nailed his theses to the church door (1517) until the proclamation of toleration by William of Orange (1576) is too horrible to be told. It seems utterly incredible that man should so ply every in-

vention of cruelty to torture and ruin his fellow-beings. To say that the church did it is a blasphemy. It was fiends incarnate, "stealing the livery of Heaven." If, in cases like Luther and Zwingli and Calvin and others, it was Christian men who were so under the power of the fell spirit of the time as to assent to the punishment of heretics by maltreatment and death, it is a relief to know that they invoked clemency rather than atrocity in the execution of sentences, as did Calvin in the case of Servetus, and others; but with few exceptions we are forced to cry out continually as we read: "Is there no flesh in man's obdurate heart?" Must acknowledged goodness and greatness of character, kindly life, Christly piety, and forgiveness toward enemies, age, sex, the innocence of childhood, the sacredness of maternity, all appeal in vain for the mercy we would extend to a serpent which we must destroy?

Dr. Burrage, in the "Anabaptists in Switzerland," Dr. Cramp, in "Baptist History," Dr. Osgood, in "Madison Avenue Lectures," and the various books of martyrology, delineate the painful tragedies, and vindicate the character of the heroic sufferers. "The blood of myriads of the German peasantry" is not an over-measure. To win their martyr prize, "they sailed through bloody seas."

Whole communities were massacred by tortures of the gibbet, the stake, drowning, or whatever cruelties the raging hatred could devise. Philip II of Spain and Henry II of France had early made a

secret league to "exterminate the accursed vermins," and, whatever their strifes with each other afterward, they alike carried out that murderous compact.

In a mountainous district of Switzerland, a numerous body of Baptists were visited by a friend from Moravia who persuaded them to emigrate to his country, where means of living were more abundant, and they would be beyond the reach of their persecutors. They disposed of their possessions, and set forth upon the long journey; but in a strange land on the way their enemies overtook them; all the men were beheaded, the women drowned, their property and little ones carried off. In the different states and districts, edicts were issued, by both ecclesiastical and civil functionaries, that all rebaptizers should be drowned, if not otherwise made away with, the language of the edict indicating the Baptist practice in baptizing: "Who immerses, let him be immersed." Executioners complained that the numbers of the victims were so great and so constantly replenished as to tire and discourage them in the work of slaughter.

Men eminent in talent, learning, and useful service by voice and pen, were particularly marked for sacrifice, and called forth, in their excruciating but triumphant deaths, the admiration of enemies for their nobility, and the loving grief of disciples for their work's sake. Hubmeier was a university professor, and a preacher and writer of great power. His sublime response was, when the decree of banishment struck him, "I appeal for justice; if I am

wrong, let me be punished." "Divine truth is immortal ; and although for awhile it may be arrested, scourged, crowned in mockery, crucified, and buried, it will nevertheless on the third day rise victorious, and rule and triumph forever and ever." Flying for life from country to country, baptizing many hundreds, and organizing them as churches of the regenerate, but finally hunted down under the tyranny of Austria, he prayed as he knelt by the stake : "O my Father, I thank thee that to-day thou wilt lift me from this valley of sorrow. With joy I die, that I may come to thee. Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, into thy hands I commend my spirit." His faithful wife, who had refused to be separated from him, with a heavy stone bound to her neck, was drowned from the bridge over the Danube.

Felix Mantz, his friend, alike gifted and learned and godly, from whom crowds of eager listeners drank in the living water, was publicly executed by the Protestant magistrates of Zürich for his preaching and baptizing. Says the chronicler : "As he was led through the shambles to the boat, he praised God that he was about to die for his truth, as Christ had foretold that his followers should suffer for the truth's sake. On the way his mother and brother came to him, and exhorted him to be steadfast ; and he persevered in his folly even to the end. When he was bound upon the hurdle, and was about to be thrown into the stream, he sang with a loud voice,

‘Into thy hand, O Lord, I commend my spirit,’ and herewith he was drawn into the water by the executioner, and drowned.” The report of it to Zwingli was: “Died gloriously, on which account the cause of truth and piety which you sustain, is weighed down exceedingly.”

In Germany, as in Switzerland, strangely enough, with the assent of Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, and Œcolampadius, the Reformers and the Romanists joined in decreeing imprisonment and death against Baptists; and the crown of martyrdom rested on brows as noble in the one country as the other. Hetzer, who preceded Luther in giving much of the Bible to the people in their native tongue, was brought to the block at Constance, where he opened his Hebrew psalter, and kneeling, translated with firm voice the twenty-fifth psalm. As he read: “He shall pluck my feet out of the net,” he looked down to the cords that bound him, and the people with sobs repeated the words. And then praying, “Through Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world by his blood,” he asked God’s presence, and calmly laid his head beneath the ax. A preacher of the persecuting party reported: “Never in Constance was seen a nobler, more manful death.” The learned Denk, who had been joined with this martyr in labors, shared his condemnation, but escaped his fate by the more kind interposition of a prevailing pest.

Thus we might extend without limit the list, commenced by the inspired writer to the Hebrews, of

those of whom the world was not worthy, "who had trials of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment," and were slain with every torture. And every name would represent crowds of those who were "partakers with them that were so used."

THE MENNONITES.

Under the bloody rule of Spain in Holland and Belgium during the Reformation period, the Anabaptists came largely to bear the name of Mennonites, from Menno, their distinguished leader. He was a Hollander in the Catholic priesthood. Hearing of an afflicting martyrdom of an Anabaptist, he began to read the Bible with reference to the Anabaptist belief, and saw that there was no authority for infant baptism. After some years he came to experience true conversion, and united with the Baptist Church. For twenty-five years he labored, journeying through the provinces, preaching to multitudes, baptizing and organizing the disciples, until, as Mosheim says, "He was almost the common father and bishop of all the Anabaptists" throughout northern Europe. He opposed all disorderly policies, and his followers, with loyal patriotism, served to their best with William of Orange and the other nobles in resisting and breaking the despotism of Spain. In personal service, and in taxing themselves to contribute money through the long war, they elicited the hearty thanks of Orange, and secured from him, as soon as he had power, the proc-

lamation of governmental protection in their rights, saying as he did to the Calvinistic magistrates at Middelburg: "You have no right to trouble yourselves with any man's conscience, so long as nothing is done to cause private harm or public scandal. We therefore expressly ordain that you desist from molesting these Baptists."

But until that deliverance the Mennonites were preyed upon by the inquisitors with ruthless ferocity all over the low countries. More of them, it is said, than of all other reformers, were slaughtered by the brutal agents of kingly and churchly tyranny.

And thus the history of this period, like that of the preceding ones, verifies Professor Osgood's statement that "the long struggle of God's church against the overlying dominion of the papacy, has been a struggle of New Testament Baptist principles for life and power;" "the spiritual power of the Reformation lay wholly in those principles which it held in common with Baptists. Its elements of decay and formalism were in those principles which we reject."

CHAPTER VII.

THE BAPTISTS AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN ENGLAND.

BUT little is known respecting the first converts to Christianity in the British Islands. There are thought to be evidences that they observed the ordinances as originally established. Even Saint Patrick of Ireland is confidently claimed by some as a Baptist; but Romish history and tradition are the religious clothing of the islands until the time of Wycliffe.

At the death of that great pioneer of reform, many were reading his translations of the Bible, and making their protests heard against the papal assumptions. For some unknown reason, these dissenters had come to be known as Lollards. In large numbers they were scattered throughout the country like the Waldenses, circulating the word of God, and quietly maintaining a purity of life and worship. The sympathies of the common people were with them. Not a few of their brethren in Holland came over to them, in the hope of some relief from the cruelties of the Inquisition.

But a new king had arisen, who knew not Wycliffe, and the persecutions which were begun before were more let loose upon all reformers. Instigated by the hierarchy, Parliament decreed the burning of all the books of dissenters, and of themselves, if

they would not recant or go into exile. Soon the fagot-piles at Smithfield were blazing, and martyr spirits were ascending to heaven. If, as in several instances, acts of pardon were passed, Baptists, "who held that infants ought not to be baptized," were excepted. Their "wicked opinions" were fatal.

A hundred and fifty years after Wycliffe translated the Bible from the Latin, William Tyndale translated the New Testament, and portions of the Old, out of the Greek and Hebrew into the English tongue — the first translation thus made. This greatly increased the knowledge and the embracing of Bible principles, and fanned the fires of persecution. Tyndale was strangled and burned, and his helpers and books shared the same fate,—a sample of the monstrous crimes under the execrable king and pope combined, Henry VIII.

This blackened despot, masked as head of the church, was followed by his son Edward VI, under whom the organization of the Church of England was carried forward by the adoption of its Articles and Book of Common Prayer, and the substitution of English instead of Latin in the ritual. No toleration was allowed to dissenters. A royal commission was appointed, with Bishop Cranmer at its head, to suppress "all heretics and contemners of the Book of Prayer," specifying particularly "the wicked opinions of the Baptists." The first recorded sufferer convicted of these was a noble lady of the

king's court, "a great disperser of Tyndale's New Testament," accused of anabaptism. She was condemned to death. All efforts of the bishops and others failing to make her confess error, they consigned her to be burned, the young king putting his name to the warrant with tears and protestations that the bishops must answer for it if it were wrong. Her friend in the court, Anne Askew, was also a victim of the Smithfield fires.

"Bloody Mary" followed, with the restoration of Catholicism as the religion of the state, and, with a wild rage for exterminating Protestantism, clouded the land with the smoke of stake-fires. The Protestant bishops, Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and others, who had approved of the capital punishment of Baptists, now found themselves the victims of the same deadly policy, and gave from the flames of martyrdom their seal to the truths of the gospel. Happy would it have been for them could they have had the consciousness which others enjoyed, that they had never inflicted upon any the crime which was inflicted upon them !

Elizabeth, half sister of Mary, reversed again the state religion, becoming herself the head of the Protestant establishment ; but the same intolerance of dissent characterized her long reign, notwithstanding the brilliance given to it by great events and great names. The haughty queen was boldly rebuked in Parliament for muzzling the free speech of her legislators. The Puritans appeared in the history as

reformers in the state church, though not seceders from it. The Independents also soon came to view, and they were made to suffer persecution in many forms, though the death by fire was reserved for Baptists alone. Afflicting instances of their meeting this fate are added to the awful preceding records. The Act of Uniformity subjected all to legal prosecutions who would not submit to the forms of the established service, and the bishops kept their detectives in search after violators of this Act, who, said Bonner, "grievously vexed and sorely infested England with sundry sorts of sects and heresies which had risen up, specially against the christening of infants."

As illustrative of Elizabeth's reign: On an Easter Sabbath morning in 1575, "thirty disciples of the Lord, men and women, had assembled in an upper room for worship, near Aldgate, one of the entrances of the city of London. Their meeting, though conducted in quietude, was detected, and a constable and his aids, addressing them as devils, demanded which of them was teacher. Twenty-seven of their names were at his command recorded, and he took seven of them to the magistrate, charging the rest to remain," and, soon returning, drove them with cruelty to the jail. After a few days they were all arraigned before the queen's commission, and told that they must renounce their belief and practice, on penalty of banishment or death. Remaining firm, they were remanded to prison. During some three

months they were repeatedly brought before the inquisitors, and subjected to every means of securing their recantations; but only meek and faithful responses were elicited. Finally the larger part of them were doomed to banishment; but five of the men were told that they could escape burning only by signing the Articles of the State Church. They were again thrust into a horrible prison, in separate cells, and given a month to face their fate. One of them died from the rigors of their treatment. Of two of the others we have not the record; but the remaining two had their death warrant signed by Elizabeth, in spite of powerful intercessions for a change of sentence, and they went together to be burned alive. For several days they were tantalized by preparations for the burning and then deferring it; but on the fatal hour they went forth serenely, Jan Peters saying: "The holy prophets and Christ our Saviour have gone this way before us," and Hendrick Terwoot declaring that it was far better to depart and be with Christ. Together they were bound to the same stake, and while a church preacher hurled at them his accusations, and thrust before them his Articles for them to acknowledge, they affirmed their faith in God's mercy through Jesus Christ, and rose triumphant over the last enemy. One of them was an aged man whose first wife had been burned at the stake in Holland, and whose present wife had a former husband among the martyrs who cry from underneath the altar, while

she herself was left with nine children in poverty and defenseless.

The first Christians in England, after the Romish apostasy, who are seen in organized form as Baptist churches, come into view not later than the commencement of the Reformation by Luther, so that when the Reformation reached England, such churches were already existing there. Traditionally, their existence dates much farther back. A stone has been exhumed in the Baptist churchyard at Cheshire inscribed with the date 1357. The records show the death of a pastor of the church in 1594, but it is not known how long previously the church had existed. Soon after the close of Elizabeth's reign, records of other churches appear. Under James I their persecutions continued, and drove them to secluded resorts.

Some of them, together with Independents who incurred similar persecutions, sought refuge in Holland. A Baptist church was gathered at Amsterdam, of which John Smyth, a convert from the ministry in the Church of England, became pastor, and was followed in the office at his death by Thomas Helwys. The oldest English Baptist confession of faith that has come down to us was published by this church in 1611, the year that the King James version of the Bible came out. This confession embraces the distinctive Baptist principles as to the way of salvation, the church, and its ordinances and officers, and it contains this clear avowal of complete relig-

ious freedom : "The magistrate is not to meddle with religions, or things of conscience, because Christ is King and Lawgiver." This, as we have seen, was no new principle in the faith or practice of Baptists.

The government of Holland, tolerant though it had become, had not attained to a policy in full harmony with this principle, and it was, at the time of this immigration, distracted by fierce contentions between Calvinism and Arminianism. Calvinism predominating, the Presbyterian became the state religion, and persecutions ensued. The Baptist immigrants mostly returned to England, and there suffered on as formerly. Soon after their return in 1612, Edward Wightman, said to be the last martyr by burning alive in England, filled up his part of the sufferings of Christ for his body's sake. In the accusation against him he was reproached with many names, but the only specifications were "that he believed the baptism of infants to be an abominable custom ; that the Lord's supper and baptism should not be celebrated as they are now practiced in the Church of England ; and that Christianity is not wholly professed and preached in that church." The infamous King James, whom the revisers of our Bible smothered with their fulsome, pious flatteries,¹ forced this good man to the stake through remonstrances and denunciations which he dared not again incur. Mr. Wightman was ancestor of the honored ministers of that name, of five or six generations, in

¹ See their Dedication in the King James Version.

Rhode Island and Connecticut, some of whom wrought effectively in securing religious liberty in our country.

The Reformers in England, other than Baptists, did not contend for full religious freedom. The Puritans strove as hard to have the civil government uphold what they held to be right, and repress what they condemned as heretical, as did the adherents of the English Church. They plainly said: "Liberty of conscience is soul murder." Even the great-souled prophet of the future, John Robinson, the pastor of the Pilgrims, did not see far enough to descry complete separation of Church and State. Says Professor Fisher, of the time when the first colonies came to New England: "At that time no political community existed in which religious liberty was recognized, and it was no part of the design of the Puritans to frame one."

Of King Charles I, Mrs. Colonel Hutchinson, a Puritan of his day, wrote: "This king was a worse encroacher upon the civil and spiritual liberties of his people by far than his father." "Many chose to abandon their country, and leave their dearest relations, to retire into any foreign soil or plantation where they might enjoy the free exercise of God's worship. Such as could not flee were tormented in the bishop's courts, fined, whipped, pilloried, imprisoned, and suffered to enjoy no rest, so that death was better than life to them; till the whole land was reduced to perfect slavery." Fourteen years a Bap-

tist minister, Thomas Brewer, lay in a loathsome prison "for his religion." Another, Samuel Howe, dying in prison, "was buried in the highway, interment in consecrated ground, so called, being refused." Of him Roger Williams afterward wrote a glowing eulogy, as "a Scripture-learned man, forced to seek a grave or bed in the highway ; yet was his life and death and burial, being attended by many hundreds of God's people, honorable and (how much more on his rising again) glorious." For holding to any one of eight specified errors, Parliament decreed the penalty of death ; and for any one of sixteen, one of which was the denial of infant baptism, imprisonment should continue until the person promised, and gave surety, to suppress his views.

And thus of churchly cruelties and heroic sufferings the historic muse wrote on, with pen dipped in tears and blood, until, sick at heart, she raised her eyes to heaven, and pleaded : O pitying skies, is there nowhere beneath your encircling dome a land where this agony can cease, because the soul is free ? — And the good stars beckoned over the western waters. From between these opposite shores of the stormy North Sea, where the lights of freedom struggled in the darkness and flickered in furious winds, were thrust out the "Mayflower" and her consorts.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE STORY OF ROGER WILLIAMS.

WHEN, in 1620, the Pilgrims sailed for America, Roger Williams was a young man about twenty years of age, a native of London. There, hearing the preachers, and attending legal courts, he showed such proficiency in shorthand reporting as to enlist the interest of the distinguished jurist, Sir Edward Coke, who, "seeing so hopeful a youth," took a liking to him, and sent him to the Sutton Hospital for schooling; whence he was advanced to college at Oxford. His after life and correspondence show that his course at the university was an extended one. Previous to his thirtieth year he had become a clergyman of the Church of England, but he had no sympathy with the wrongs in the established religion. When near the end of his life, he wrote: "From a child, now about threescore years, the Father of Lights touched my soul with love to himself, and to his only Begotten, the true Lord Jesus, and to his Holy Scriptures." This regenerate experience identified him with the Separatists in disowning the state establishment as Christ's Church. Thus allied in spirit, he followed them to America in 1630, at about thirty years of age, accompanied by his young wife, Mary, the faithful sharer in his

eventful future. "He was," says the chronicle of the colony, "a young minister, godly and zealous, having precious gifts." Of the missionary spirit, that had begotten a longing to preach the gospel to the Indian heathen of the land that he sought, we shall speak in another chapter. We have first to view him as one of the heroes in conflict with hierarchical assumptions. Mr. Bancroft's picture has shown him as bringing to our shores "the trophy of the Baptists," seized from the hands which had fought to destroy it, through the ages of the old world. Let us identify his distinctive work as a pioneer of religious freedom in America.

It is not his glory, as we have seen, to be the first to discover and promulgate the principles of religious liberty. Others had taught the same as clearly as he was to do, and suffered for their teaching far more than he would suffer. At the unveiling of the Roger Williams monument in Providence some years since, Professor Diman, a Congregationalist, brought out most justly, as Baptist writers have often done, the single and splendid achievement of the great founder of Rhode Island. It is that he, first of all founders or rulers of states, used his opportunity and his wisdom *to incorporate in civil government impartial and complete religious freedom*. Thus the eminent Judge Story decisively testified: "In the code of laws established in Rhode Island, for the first time since Christianity ascended the throne of the Cæsars, the declaration was put in force that con-

science should be free, and men should not be punished for worshipping God in the way they are persuaded he requires."

Others, with full authority, had the opportunity of doing what Williams did, but all of them stopped short of doing it.

The claim to the contrary has been advanced in favor of Lord Baltimore, in the Catholic colony of Maryland. But his charter, of later date than Williams's colony, made "Christianity the law of the land," and extended toleration (not freedom) to all Christians (not all men). And consistently the legislation of the colony proceeded to inflict penalties—even that of death—on denials of Christian truths. The Massachusetts and Connecticut colonies had their opportunity, but missed it, as did also Virginia and others. Pennsylvania came nearer to Rhode Island in its charter provisions, perhaps because William Penn was the son of an English Baptist; but persecutions were not so guarded against as to be wholly excluded.

Let us notice the particulars of Williams's guidance in New England. At his arrival there were three centers around which society was gathering and taking form. The Plymouth Colony was of the Pilgrims, or Independent Separatists. They had sundered all connection with the Church of England, and regarded their own church as divinely authorized to govern itself; yet the control in religious affairs by civil government, and in the interest of their

church, was not with them a fully disowned policy. The Salem settlement was a close corporation of Puritans, who had ceased to adhere to the Church of England, but organized a union of Church and State much more rigid than was accepted by the Pilgrims. No one who was not a member in their church could be a citizen in their colony. The Boston immigrants continued their connection with the Church of England, seeking only relief from its kingly oppressions.

With none of these communities did Roger Williams find himself able to live in agreement. He was invited to exercise his ministry in Boston, and met with much appreciation; but he could not indorse their union with the English Church. At Salem he was also repeatedly solicited to accept service, and was heard with great favor during considerable periods; but he could not consent to the civil magistrate's coercions in religion. He also here became accused of "inculcating principles tending to rebaptism." At Plymouth, where more toleration was exercised, he was received as a member of the church, and his preaching was well approved for two years, as Governor Bradford testifies. But when the love of the people at Salem called him back to that pulpit, Elder Brewster, acting in place of a minister, persuaded the church to dismiss him from their communion, "lest he should run the same course of rigid separation and anabaptistry which John Smyth had done at Amsterdam." And thus

it appears that the principles of the Baptists came out in his ministry from the first, and were the cause of the differences which he had with the leaders of all the New England settlements.¹

It has been charged that he was factious, disorderly, and pestilent; but the testimony of those who opposed him was that he never failed to show a Christian spirit toward those with whom he had the most trying controversies. Governor Winthrop wrote him: "We have often tried your patience, but never exhausted it." If upon some minor subjects he had notions which seem to us whimsical, we have to remember that they were things that were in the air in his day, and that he was too conscientious to allow anything to pass before him without challenging it to take his judgment.

The principles which finally forbade his being tolerated in Massachusetts, were those which allied him with the Baptists. It was charged against him at Salem that "in one year's time he filled the place with principles of rigid separation tending to anabaptism;" and in his trial before the other ministers of the colony, being called to express their judgment, they said: "Opinions which would not allow the magistrate to intermeddle, even to restrain a church from heresy or apostasy, were not to be endured." The court warned against him, as having declared

¹ The Plymouth colony was not wholly free from the persecuting policy. Burrage, "History of Baptists in New England," pp. 26, 40.

“that the magistrate might not punish a breach of the Sabbath, or any other offense as a breach of the first table” of the decalogue. Williams acknowledged that he was justly charged with these sentiments; and also with disowning the Church of England as unregenerate in its members, and persecuting; as claiming that lands should be purchased of the Indians rather than of the crown; “that it is not lawful to call a wicked person to swear or pray, as being acts of God’s worship,” or “to hear any of the ministers of the parish churches in England.” His words were: “I acknowledge the particulars were rightly summed up. And I also hope that as I then maintained the rocky strength of them, to my own and other consciences’ satisfaction, so, through the Lord’s assistance, I shall be ready, for the same grounds, not only to be bound and banished, but to die also in New England, as for most holy truths of God in Christ Jesus.”

The decree of banishment by the General Court of Massachusetts, in November, 1635, “ordered that the said Mr. Williams shall depart out of this jurisdiction within six weeks now next coming, which, if he neglect to perform, it shall be lawful for the governor and two of the magistrates to send him to some place out of this jurisdiction, not to return any more without leave from the court.” An extension of his time until spring was granted in hope of his return to England; but the fear of his establishing a neighboring colony, in which many indignant friends

were ready to unite, led the authorities secretly to dispatch a vessel to Salem to seize him and transport him to the mother country, where there were ways of taking care of such troublers. Williams learned of the plot, and in the darkness, kissing his Mary and babes good-by, he took to the woods. Through more than three months of dead winter he wandered in trackless snows and forests, "sorely tossed, not knowing what bread or bed did mean," save as the Indians befriended him. At last, upon the western shore of the Narragansett, he found a land in its virginity, covered by no title but such as he could secure by friendliness and grace from its wild natives.

Here, having purchased the lands for a colony, and gathered to him his little family, he most generously welcomed others who were flying in quest of freedom as he had done, and freely made them his equals in the property and rights of the settlement. His account of this is in these words: "Having, in a sense of God's merciful providence to me in my distress, called the place 'Providence,' I desired it might be a shelter for persons distressed for conscience. And then, considering the condition of divers of my countrymen, I communicated my said purchase unto them." "He might," says Professor Gammell, "have retained the lands as his own permanent fee, and, like the founders of Pennsylvania and Maryland, having secured them by charter from the king, have amassed wealth and dignities, and be-

queathed them as a legacy to his children ;” yet he lived and died a poor man as to wealth.

The Christian refugees who came into the “shelter” thus provided and freely opened for them by this generous forerunner, subscribed a fraternal league of fidelity in civil duties ; and when the charter was obtained and laws were enacted, their purpose and limitations were fixed and proclaimed in the memorable announcement never before permitted in a civil code : “These are the laws that concern all men, which by common consent are ratified and established throughout the whole colony. And otherwise than what is here forbidden, all men may walk as their consciences persuade them, every one in the name of his God. And let the saints of the Most High walk in this colony without molestation, and in the name of Jehovah their God forever and ever.” “Otherwise than in such cases as do disturb the civil peace, the magistrate is not to punish the breach of the first table.”

In 1642 Williams went as the representative of the colony to England, and secured in the following year the patent, which, recognizing these principles of freedom, and adopted by the settlements, was the constitution of Rhode Island until 1663, when the amended charter was obtained, and perpetuated the great distinction of a civil government granting to all equal religious freedom.

All this has an old sound to us, and as a sentiment, it was old then ; but as an utterance from the seat of

legislative and executive power, to be forever made good throughout a state, it was new and strange enough. The same year that this charter thus proclaimed, Massachusetts enacted that "if any person or persons within this jurisdiction shall either openly condemn or oppose the baptizing of infants, or seduce thereto, or leave the congregation [where everybody was compelled to be present] during the administration of the rite, they shall be sentenced to banishment." And the same year a poor man was tied up and whipped for refusing to have his own child sprinkled. All over this country, all over Europe, there was a state church of some name, and more or less of oppression and persecution had to be endured by dissenters. One little spot had at last been lighted on the dark surface of the globe, which Christ came to irradiate with holy freedom.

Two years after this standard was erected at Providence, the first Baptist minister in America, as some believe, came as a fugitive from Massachusetts persecutions to the inviting refuge. John Clarke, M. D., had received a liberal education, and practiced medicine in London. Among the early immigrants to Boston, he appears to have served as a preacher as well as a physician, and was driven by persecutions from that colony. Williams received him and others who accompanied him, generously, and aided them in getting land possessions and charter-rights on the island, afterward called Rhode Island, where they planted the twin capital

of the little state, Newport. Here Clarke was the preacher and "the good physician," and soon organized the Baptist church which was the second one in this country, that at Providence being the first.

Clarke's part in establishing religious liberty as the civil law of the state was scarcely less than that of Williams. His sufferings in Massachusetts were repeated when he ventured to visit a member of his church residing in that state. A meeting was being held in the brother's house, and Dr. Clarke had commenced preaching, when constables marched in and arrested him and the brethren who accompanied him. They were kept some weeks in prison, and then condemned to fines, and further confinement and public whipping. Dr. Clarke's fine of twenty pounds was paid. An associate preacher fared worse, as we shall see hereafter.

After Clarke's release, he and Williams were sent by the Rhode Island colonists to England, as Williams had been before, to secure charter rights. Clarke found it necessary to remain twelve years, — "the modest and virtuous, persevering and disinterested envoy," as Bancroft calls him, — until he secured from Charles II the amended charter, which more safely secured perpetual religious liberty, and remained the constitution of the state until 1848, nearly two hundred years. While in England, Clarke published his narrative of the New England

persecutions, and, with Williams, enjoyed the intimate friendship and hearty sympathy of John Milton. Returning to Newport, Clarke finished his life as pastor and physician, beloved of all, and held "in everlasting remembrance." Rev. John Callender, in his history, says of him: "He was a faithful and useful minister, courteous in all the relations of life, an ornament to his profession, and to the several offices which he sustained. His memory is deserving of lasting honor for his efforts toward establishing the first government in the world which gave to all equal civil and religious liberty. To no man is Rhode Island more indebted than to him. He was one of the original projectors of the settlement of the island, and one of its ablest legislators. No character in New England is of purer fame than John Clarke's."²

Still Roger Williams holds the place of leader in this great achievement in civil government; and when helpers joined him, he was their strongest yoke-fellow. When, under the charter, a president or governor was to be elected, he was the spontaneous choice. Under his guidance the colony enjoyed friendly relations with the Indians, and he magnanimously interposed at great peril in behalf of his persecutors, dissuading their savage assailants from their revengeful plots. The terrible King Philip's war was waged by the other colonies without con-

² Cramp's "Baptist History," p. 478; American Cyclopaedia.

sulting Rhode Island, and against its humane protest; so did the rights of all human kind stand sacred on the consecrated spot.³

³The following letter from Reuben A. Guild, LL. D., the veteran librarian and historian of Brown University, was elicited by a statement that "in 1676 the town of Providence made a sale of Indians (under a law enslaving them) and distribution of the proceeds, and Roger Williams's name stands in the records as an adviser in the division, and a sharer in the booty." Dr. Guild's letter: —

"In Knowles's 'Life of Roger Williams,' page 347, I find that at a town-meeting, Aug. 14, 1676, a list was made of persons who 'stayed at home, and went not away,' referring to those who remained in Providence during the war, and did not flee to Newport. To these persons it was judged that certain Indians who were captives ought to be delivered as slaves or servants, to serve until they had reached the age of from twenty-six to thirty-seven years, they to be free, of course, after that service. The committee on the subject, appointed at the town-meeting aforesaid, report the names of twenty five men who 'stayed,' etc.; of course Roger Williams heads the list. Whether he accepted any of these captive Indians as *servants*, or sold their *services*, I have no means at present of determining. The Indians were not sold, only their services. I am sure that Williams in this case, *as in all other cases*, acted honorably, and according to his sense of duty.

"Yours truly,

"REUBEN A. GUILD.

"*Providence, Jan. 30, 1894.*"

Professor Gammell quotes the Providence action similarly. When it is remembered how common in early New England was the practice of indenture in case of indebted or criminal or dependent persons, and that wars are still terminated by demanding indemnity of the conquered and securities against renewing hostilities, it will be seen how different was this action from that of slave-dealing in Indians. Add to this

that there is no proof that Williams was the receiver, either of service or of money, and he stands in no need of vindication. We may be sure that it would have been a favored captive from that bloody war who should have fallen into his hands whose "sole desire was to do the natives good," and who kept up his regular preaching and kindnesses with them past his fourscore years, and labored to leave in print his teaching for their use after he was gone.

CHAPTER IX.

CONSTITUTIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM THROUGHOUT AMERICA: EARLY COLONIAL.

FROM the establishment of the Rhode Island settlements, with complete religious liberty incorporated and made practical in their organic law, dates the agitation for its adoption in all the other colonies, and in the states and the nation. In Massachusetts, indeed, this agitation had existed and was spreading through the influence of Roger Williams and those of similar principles, before it resulted in the migrations to Narragansett Bay and its island; and those migrations did not eliminate the whole of the disturbing element.

There had been planted "the root of compulsive uniformity" in that colony, when, in 1631, its General Court "ordered and agreed that for the time to come no man shall be admitted to the freedom of this body politic but such as are members of some of the churches within the limits of the same," a test which came "to deprive one who did not conform, of more civil privileges than a non-conformist was deprived of in England." To make the aim of this expulsion more sure, it was afterward "ordered that no person being a member of any church which shall

hereafter be gathered without the approbation of the magistrates, and the greater part of the churches, shall be admitted to the freedom of this commonwealth."

But though excluded from citizenship, "every inhabitant in any town is liable to contribute to all charges, both in church and commonwealth," and "shall be compelled thereto by assessment and distress, to be levied by the constable or other officer of the town."

THE CONTENTION IN AMERICAN COLONIES.

Against these oppressions Baptists were the persons who led in protesting, and in suffering under them. They were also further oppressed by being prohibited from all religious meetings separate from the established churches ; and if the prohibition did not of itself prohibit, the constable was bidden "assure them that we shall by God's assistance take some such strict and speedy course for preventing the evils which may otherwise ensue, as our duty to God and charge over his people do call for from us."

The strict and speedy course was soon exhibited. A "Mr. Lenthal held that only baptism was the door of entrance into the visible church. The common sort of people did eagerly embrace his opinion ; and some labored to get such a church on foot as all baptized ones might communicate in, without any further trial of them. For this end they procured

many hands [signers] in Weymouth to a blank, intending to have Mr. Lenthal's advice [assent] to a call." For getting these signers, John Smith, John Spur, and others were fined from forty-five pounds down to as many shillings, and Mr. Lenthal had to find citizenship in Rhode Island, where he taught school and preached.

Hugh Bewit, being charged with infectious error, it was "ordered that the said Hugh Bewit should be gone out of our jurisdiction by the twenty-fourth present upon pain of death, and not to return upon pain of being hanged." He also withdrew to Providence, and for many years was well known and honored there.¹

In 1644, nine years after the banishment of Roger Williams, the Massachusetts General Court passed their first law in which Baptists are expressly named as the criminals to be dealt with. The Act reads:—

"Forasmuch as experience hath plentifully and often proved that since the first rising of the Anabaptists, about one hundred years since, they have been the incendiaries of commonwealths and the infecters of persons in main matters of religion, and the troublers of churches in all places where they have been, and that they who have held the baptizing of infants unlawful have usually held other errors; and, whereas, divers of this kind have since our coming into New England appeared amongst ourselves, it is ordered and agreed that if any person or persons within this jurisdiction shall either openly condemn or oppose the baptizing of infants, or go about secretly to

¹Backus, "History of the Baptists," from which many of these facts are taken.

seduce others from the approbation or use thereof, every such person or persons shall be sentenced to banishment."

The celebrated discussion by John Cotton and Roger Williams comes in here. It was conducted in writing and printed in England, constituting the volumes entitled the "Bloody Tenet."

Mr. Cotton, one of the first, and the most celebrated, of the Boston ministers, had risen to distinction in the English Church; but for sentiments against the absolutism of Charles I and the persecutions of the infamous Bishop Laud, he had been obliged to fly for his life to this country. Adopting the Puritanism of Massachusetts, he became its leading clergyman.

An imprisoned Baptist in England wrote a paper in argument against persecution in matters of conscience. A friend of minister Cotton placed it in his hands, requesting him to answer it. Strangely enough, the fugitive from such persecution proceeded to justify the punishment, by civil penalties, of opinions judged heretical, as the Massachusetts policy obliged him to do, or sacrifice his office. His answer was not satisfactory to the friend who solicited it, and was sent by the same friend to Mr. Williams to be reviewed. The answer had referred to a "treatise sent to some of the brethren late of Salem, who doubted, as you do." Mr. Williams wrote for that treatise, and found it to be, "A Model of Church and Civil Power." His review he entitled, "The Bloody Tenet of Persecution for

Conscience' Sake." It was written while he was a delegate in England, and brought thence in print on his coming home. It exposed the errors of the tenet in question; and vindicated the position that civil government must leave men free in their religious convictions and peaceable acts.

Mr. Cotton complained of being thus arraigned before the public, and endeavored to defend his teaching, and show "the Bloody Tenet Washed and made White in the Blood of the Lamb." In his struggling attempt to stand on the ground he had taken, he grasped the assumption that the dissenter "is not punished for his conscience, but for sinning against his conscience, after due conviction of fundamental errors." Arguments from Scripture were also attempted.

Williams's rejoinder came under the heading: "The Bloody Tenet yet More Bloody, by Mr. Cotton's Endeavor to Wash it White," and he charges upon that tenet the guilt of the blood of the Lamb "spilt in the blood of his servants,—the blood of millions spilt in former and later wars for conscience' sake." "Is not this the guise and profession of all that ever persecuted or hunted men for their religion and conscience," that "conscience is deluded," that the heretic is punished because of his obstinacy?

These treatises by Williams were published in successive editions, and were of telling effect in the contest for the rights of conscience.

The most notorious of the Massachusetts inflictions

for the peaceable exercise of these rights, by Christians against whom no other accusation could be made, was the public whipping of a Baptist minister at the head of State street in Boston. As alluded to in a former chapter, Rev. Obadiah Holmes had gone with his brother pastor from Newport, Rhode Island, to visit an aged member of their church in Massachusetts, the member being confined to his home, and requesting such a visit.

At the house of this brother, on the Lord's day, there was a private service of which Pastor Clarke gives this account:—

“To my companions in the house where I lodged, and to four or five strangers who came in unexpectedly after I had begun, I was imparting, from Rev. 3 : 10, opening and proving what is meant by ‘the hour of temptation,’ what by ‘the word of his patience’ and their keeping it, and how He that hath the key of David will keep those that keep the word of his patience from the hour of temptation,—while, I say, I was yet speaking, there came into the house where we were, two constables, who with their clamorous tongues made an interruption in my discourse, and more uncivilly disturbed us than the pursuivants of the old English bishops were wont to do, telling us that they were come with authority from the magistrate to apprehend us. I then desired to see the authority by which they proceeded, whereupon they plucked forth their warrant, and one of them, with a trembling hand, as conscious he might have been better employed, read it to us.”

Mr. Clarke assured the officers that there would be no resistance, but asked that, allowing him to finish the service, they would remain and become witnesses of its character. This was refused, and

pastors Clarke and Holmes, with another brother who had come with them, were carried away to a guard-house; and afterward, on their consent if they might be free to express their disfellowship, they were taken to the public service of the established church. At the close of this service Mr. Clarke, courteously asking permission to speak, and the pastor granting it, was expressing his dissent from their "visible order," when he was bidden stop, and warned that he would have to answer for his words.

They were guarded over night, and the next day sent to the prison in Boston. After two weeks Mr. Clarke had his conviction and fine of twenty pounds, or whipping, rendered; the governor, stepping up to him and saying that he had denied infant baptism, and deserved death, added: "You go up and down, and secretly insinuate unto those that are weak; but you cannot maintain it before our ministers. You may try to dispute with them."

Mr. Clarke accepted the challenge, and from the prison the next day sent to the court his acceptance thus:—

"Whereas, it pleased this honored court yesterday to condemn the faith and order which I hold and practice, and, after you had passed your sentence upon me for it, you were pleased to express I could not maintain the same against your ministers, and thereupon publicly proffered me a dispute with them; be pleased by these few lines to understand I readily accept with them, and therefore desire you would appoint the time when,

and the person with whom, in that public place where I was condemned, I may with freedom, and without molestation of the civil power, dispute that point publicly ; when I doubt not, by the strength of Christ, to make it good out of his last will and testament, unto which nothing is to be added, and from which nothing is to be diminished. Thus desiring the Father of lights to shine forth, and by his power expel the darkness, I remain your well-wisher,

JOHN CLARKE."

The court, "after much ado, informed Mr. Clarke that a disputation was granted to be next week ;" but the ministers "made no small stir about the matter." Mr. Clarke communicated in writing the positions which he would undertake to maintain. They embraced the doctrines that Christ is the only Lord of the conscience in religious matters, that regenerate believers are the subjects, and immersion is the act in baptism, and the church is the body of those only who are thus qualified and introduced, and that no member of it should be restrained from exercising his gifts, "by way of prophecy, edification, exhortation, and comfort, where injury is not offered to the person, name, or estate of others."

But every proposal for the discussion was thwarted by the ministers, and Mr. Clarke was notified of his discharge from imprisonment, friends having paid his fine without his consent and against his judgment. Thus, as with Paul at Rome, the things which happened to this imprisoned minister fell out rather unto the progress of the gospel, so that his bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the

whole prosecution, and emboldened the brethren to speak the word without fear.

Another of the imprisoned brethren from Rhode Island had his smaller fine paid, and was released.

But the other minister, Holmes, insisted upon suffering the alternative of being whipped, as the only way of maintaining a conscience void of offense toward God and man ; and after the hardships of imprisonment for two months, that penalty was inflicted. We have the account of it written by himself to his Baptist friends, ministers and others, in London.

At the time of receiving his sentence, he says :—

“As I went from the bar, I expressed myself in these words: ‘I bless God I am counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus.’ Whereupon John Wilson, their pastor, as they call him, struck me before the judgment-seat, and cursed me, saying: ‘The curse of God, or Jesus, go with thee.’ So we were carried to the prison, where not long after I was deprived of my two loving friends, at whose departure the adversary stepped in, took hold of my spirit, and troubled me for the space of an hour; and then the Lord came in, and sweetly relieved me; and although there were that would have paid the money if I would accept it, yet I durst not accept of deliverance in such a way. The night before I should suffer according to my sentence, it pleased God I rested, and slept quietly. In the morning my friends came to visit me, desiring me to take the refreshment of wine and other comforts; but my resolution was not to drink wine or strong drink that day until my punishment was over, lest in case I had more strength, courage, and boldness than ordinarily could be expected, the world should either say, ‘He is drunk with new wine,’ or ‘that the strength and comfort of the creature hath

carried him through.' I betook myself to my chamber, where I might communicate with my God, and commit myself to him. I had no sooner sequestered myself, but Satan let fly at me, saying, 'Remember thyself, thy birth, thy breeding and friends, thy wife, children, name, and credit;' but as this was sudden, so there came in sweetly from the Lord as sudden an answer: 'Tis for my Lord! I must not deny him before the sons of men, but rather lose all,—yea, wife, children, and mine own life also!' To this the tempter replies: 'O, but that is the question. Is it for him? Are not pride and self in the bottom? Thou hast so professed and practiced, and now art loth to deny it.' Surely this temptation was strong, and thereupon I made diligent search; and after awhile there was even as it had been a voice from heaven, in my very soul bearing witness that it was for my Lord's case and sake, and for him alone. And when I heard the voice of my keeper come for me, even cheerfulness did come upon me, and taking my Testament in my hand, I went along with him to the place of execution. I desired to speak a few words, but the magistrate answered: 'It is not now a time to speak.' Whereupon I took leave [liberty], and said: 'Men and brethren, fathers and countrymen, I beseech you give me leave to speak a few words, and the rather because heré are many spectators to see me punished, and I am to seal with my blood, if God gives me strength, that which I hold and practice in reference to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. That which I have to say in brief is this: Although I confess I am no disputant, yet seeing I am to seal what I hold with my blood, I am ready to defend it by the word.' The magistrate answered, 'Now is no time to dispute.' Then said I, 'I desire to give an account of the faith and order I hold;' and this I desired three times, but in comes Mr. Flint, and saith to the executioner, 'Fellow, do thine office, for this fellow would but make a long speech to delude the people.' So I, being resolved to speak, told the people: 'That which I suffer for is the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus

Christ.' 'No,' saith Mr. Nowell, 'it is for your error.' To which I replied, 'In all the time of my imprisonment, wherein I was left alone, which of all your ministers in all that time came to convince me of an error?' Still Mr. Flint calls the man to do his office. So before, and in the time of, his pulling off my clothes, I continued speaking, telling them that I had so learned that for all Boston I would not give my body into their hands thus to be bruised upon another account, yet upon this I would not give the hundredth part of a wampumpeag [sixth of a penny] to free it out of their hands; and that I made as much conscience of unbuttoning one button as I did of paying their thirty pounds [his fine]."

Of the severity of the infliction, Governor Jencks, of Rhode Island, born about the time of it, and intimate with the families, says: "Mr. Holmes was whipped thirty stripes in such an unmerciful manner that in many days, if not some weeks, he could take no rest but as he lay upon his knees and elbows, not being able to suffer any part of his body to touch the bed whereon he lay." Holmes himself says: "It was grievous, as the spectators said, the man striking with all his strength with a three-corded whip, spitting on his hands three times;" but, "so it pleased the Lord to come in and so to fill my heart and tongue, that with an audible voice I broke forth, praying unto the Lord not to lay this sin to their charge; for, in truth, as the strokes fell upon me, I had such a spiritual manifestation of God's presence as the like thereof I never felt, nor can fleshly tongue express. When they loosed me from the post, having joyfulness in my heart, and cheerfulness in my

countenance, as the spectators observed, I told the magistrates, 'You have struck as with roses.'"

Two of his Baptist brethren could not refrain from shaking his hand as he went back to prison, one of them in silence, the other simply saying, "Blessed be the Lord." Both were arrested and fined forty shillings for the act, or sentenced to be whipped.

Mr. Holmes was of an honored family in England, who educated their sons at Oxford; and after he came in New England to unite with the Baptists, he was a worthy leader among them, and pastor for years at Newport.

Thus wrought and suffered these early New England Baptists, to extend the dominion of freedom whose standard had been raised at Providence.

The intolerance of Massachusetts went to still more severe extremes with the Quakers, because they, when banished on pain of death, seemed to court the death. Refusing to go out of the jurisdiction, or persisting in returning, a number of them were hanged, irrespective of character or sex. Others were cruelly mutilated.

During the administration of Governor Leverett, the civil policy of Massachusetts was more tolerant of dissent from the church. The Baptists of Boston, though compelled to meet in obscure places, were increased in numbers, and, encouraged by the friendliness of the governor, and by a dissuasion addressed to the court by the king, Charles II, ventured to provide themselves with a church property in the city.

It was of humble pretension and unchurchly appearance, and they had entered it for worship before its design came to the notice of the authorities ; but soon the pastor and leaders found themselves summoned to account before the General Court. It was a new case, and no law fitting it, the Act was passed "that no persons whatever, without the consent of the freemen of the town where they live, first orderly obtained at a public meeting assembled for that end, and license of the county court, or in defect of such consent, a license by the special order of the General Court, shall erect or make use of any house wherein such persons may meet." The penalty of transgressing was the forfeiture of the property, and its sale or demolition by the county. Under this law it was demanded of the arraigned officers that they pledge themselves and the church to desist from meeting in said house. They responded that they must consult their brethren ; this was at first denied them, but subsequently a short opportunity was allowed. The response which they made, in a most respectful paper, does equal honor to their manliness and their godliness. We quote in part : —

"1. God having led us into this order and way of church fellowship, we do hereby confess that what we did was not out of opposition to, or contempt of, the churches of Christ in New England, but in a holy imitation, merely for the better enjoyment of the liberty of our consciences, the great motive to this removal at first into this wilderness.

"2. That the building, a convenient place for our public church assembly, was not thought of affronting authority; there

being no law in the country against any such practice at the erecting of this house, we did therefore think, as the apostle saith, Where there is no law, there is no transgression. The dictates of nature, or the common prudence belonging to mankind, and the practice of the country throughout, led to the seeking of this convenience.

"3. There being a law since made against meeting in the place built, we submitted to the same until we fully understood, by letters from several in London, that it was his Majesty's pleasure and command that we should enjoy liberty of our meetings in the same manner as others of his Protestant subjects, and the General Court at their last meeting not having voted a non-concurrence.

"4. As, therefore, the two tribes and a half (Josh. 22 : 11) did humbly and meekly vindicate themselves upon the erecting of their altar, when challenged for it by Eleazer and the messengers of the ten tribes, so do we hereby confess in like manner that we have not designed by this act any contempt of authority, nor any departing from the living God, or churches of his worship. The Lord God of gods, he knows it, though it be our lot, with the apostle, after the way some call heresy, so to worship the God of our fathers.

"Your petitioners therefore, having no design against the peace of this place, but being still as ready as ever to hazard our lives for the defense of the people of God here, do humbly request that this our profession and declaration may find acceptance with this honorable court, as that of the two tribes did with Eleazer; and that we may still, through your allowance and protection, enjoy the liberty of God's worship in such place as he hath afforded us; and as in duty bound, we will humbly pray."

The response to this Christian appeal was to send the constable to force his way from the adjacent premises and nail up the doors of the Baptist meeting-house, posting a notice that any who should open

them without an order from the court would do so at their peril. The next Lord's day the church met in the meeting-house yard, but they were driven thence also into less public resorts, and numbers of them imprisoned.

But while the century wore away amid these inveterate persecutions, a more humane and Christian sentiment was having growth. More and more of the best civilians in New England and in the mother country took the side of toleration, though few advanced to the Rhode Island standard of freedom equally for all.

Sir Henry Vane, of the nobility of England, and of the nobility of Christ as well, came to Massachusetts at twenty-three years of age, a cultured and gifted advocate of religious liberty, and but a year afterward was elected governor; but his principles were too advanced for that colony, and the next year he was superseded. His influence in this country and in high court positions in England whither he returned, was a powerful aid to Williams and Clarke in their labors in both countries. Milton and Locke were among the mightiest who at that day gave their strength to the cause in which Baptists were giving their blood.

Cotton Mather, a grandson of John Cotton, and his successor in the ministry, represented a greatly changed sentiment and policy in Boston, when in behalf of the state churches he sent a brotherly

notice and assurance of welcome to the Baptist church, as a participant in union thanksgiving services; and at the ordination of Elisha Callender as pastor of the Baptist church; the son-in-law of Cotton, by invitation, gave the hand of fellowship, and his grandson preached the sermon; entitling it, "Good Men United."

The exaction of taxes, however, from all to support the standing order, continued far into the future.

The other American colonies, like Massachusetts, legalized and practiced the persecuting policy through a century and a half, or longer.

In Connecticut we read that in 1744 "Elder Timothy Peckham," for baptizing in New London and Saybrook, "and a number more, were imprisoned at New London, one of whom was a woman with a child at her breast."

In Vermont and New Hampshire similar imprisonments, and seizures of property for church taxes, were suffered.

In New York the Catholics were not legally tolerated, and an Act was passed banishing their priests and Jesuits. William Wickenden, of Providence, the first Baptist preacher in New York City, "had the honor to be imprisoned for months for it."

Pennsylvania, under the charter given to William Penn, whose father was an English Baptist, was supposed to have religious liberty secured, after the

example of Rhode Island, dated forty years earlier; but the security failed when partisan divisions arose, and Quakers were fined and imprisoned for dissent, in one instance a Baptist magistrate giving freedom to the prisoner.

Maryland, where Catholics claim that religious freedom was first established, did indeed give a better toleration than papists elsewhere would assent to, probably because the charter would not otherwise have been granted them; but penalties, culminating even in death, were affixed to denial of some of the doctrines of Christianity, and, under Episcopal supremacy, Baptists were heavily fined for withholding infants from baptism, and taxes for the state church were enforced.

In Virginia, "Baptist ministers had often been imprisoned for preaching the gospel without license from the Episcopalians, until the war of the Revolution put a stop to it." The colonial charter and laws were most severe in enforcing conformity. Long lists of names come down to us of ministers and others who suffered, even to being hunted with dogs, and who carried their scars to their graves, for the simple rights of speech and worship.

At length, however, public sentiment took powerful impersonations for aiding the sufferers in their contests. James Madison, living among them, enlisted as their advocate. He "prepared memorials, advocated bills and other measures, sustaining the cause of conscience, and he did it well and from the

heart. Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson were also among those engaged in this cause of religious liberty."²

Carolina, both North and South, and Georgia, made the same record of persecutions to which Baptists formed the first line of resistance. The Episcopal Church, in which the Methodists were then included, subjected all to its support, on pain for refusal of the common penalties.

The governing principle for which the Baptists contended was demonstrated conclusively in several instances. It was not a contention for supremacy, nor did it assert itself because of their inequality in civil advantages. It spoke as decidedly when it was proposed to make them equal in advantages under the laws with other denominations, but on terms of state support. In 1784, when they were getting the best of the conflict in Virginia, the parties who had opposed them offered a compromise. A bill was introduced for a "General Assessment," under which every citizen should be obliged to pay for the maintenance of the Christian religion, but be free to designate his payment of the tax laid upon him to whatever society he chose. It is recorded that as a denomination, the Baptists stood alone in opposition to this proposal; for though it would relieve them financially, it would conflict with their belief as to the New Testament policy on the union of Church and State which it prohibits. They there-

² Bitting, "Religious Liberty and the Baptists."

fore embodied their principles in a declaration for complete religious freedom, and requested Mr. Madison to formulate them into a memorial, praying the legislature to pass such a law. This was done by him in a memorial which was circulated over the state, and the next year the law was passed.

The same year a similar general assessment was enacted in Georgia, under Episcopal prompting, but the Baptists rose in remonstrance, electing legislators to work for the repeal, which was soon effected.

CHAPTER X.

CONSTITUTIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM THROUGHOUT AMERICA : LATER COLONIAL.

THE STORY OF ISAAC BACKUS.

WE are now coming to the epoch when the Declaration of Independence was to be put forth and sustained, and the national Constitution formed and ratified. In demanding and securing full religious liberty in these colonial and national movements, Baptists were foremost, and Isaac Backus was their most prominent leader. For more than twenty years he was kept by the Baptists of New England and the country in the official position of agent for securing the reform of government in this particular ; and as a man of great ability and commanding general influence, he was at the front of the goodly company with whose honored names his is associated.

He was the author of an extended "History of New England, with Special Reference to the Denomination of Christians called Baptists ;" and his published papers in the interest of religious liberty were numerous. In addition to his own works, there is the "Memoir of the Life and Times of Isaac Backus," by President Hovey, of Newton

Theological Institution, and historical discourses and encyclopedias, to all of which we are indebted for the materials of our sketch. On the spot where his long pastorate was spent, in North Middleborough, Mass., a fitting granite monument has just been dedicated, bearing this inscription :—

ISAAC BACKUS.

Elder Isaac Backus, A. M.,
A pioneer champion of Religious Liberty,
And the earliest Baptist Historian
in America.

Born in 1724, died 1806,

In the fifty-ninth year of his ministry in this precinct.

Erected by a grateful people.

A. D. 1893.

Rev. David Barnes Ford, of Hanover, Mass., who had borne a leading part in securing the erection, gave the valuable historical discourse, other addresses adding great interest to the occasion.

It is noteworthy that all the first leaders in the assaults upon hierarchical tyranny were men who, in mature life, after their education and introduction to service in pedobaptist churches, changed to embrace and propagate the faith as held by Baptists : John Smyth, Thomas Helwys, Roger Williams, Carey, Judson, the Haldanes, Oncken, Baldwin, Backus, and others.

The gracious revival which came upon New England a hundred and fifty years ago aroused excited

opposition in many of the standing order of clergymen. Young Backus experienced the saving change, and his talented, godly mother greatly joyed in the Lord during those revivals. Their pastor, in the established church in Norwich, Conn., was grievously incensed by the zeal of the New Lights, as the revival people were called. Those of this character therefore came to hold meetings by themselves. They were summoned by the pastor to account, and to cease from the offensive conduct. Among them were the widow Backus and her son Isaac, who had promptly united with the church. "They were brought before the church tribunal, and when interrogated as to their reasons for absenting themselves from the church, gave answer in harmony with the convictions of their own souls, and calmly but firmly declined to yield the ground they occupied." They were suspended, which meant exclusion, until they recanted. The rod of correction struck the soul of young Backus, and waked to assert itself the principle of liberty that was strongly implanted there. He left his native city to find "freedom to worship God." He was ready to preach "liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound," both in the spiritual and in the literal sense.

His mother and brother identified themselves with the "Separate" Congregationalists; but they were still compelled to support the minister who had excluded them, or lie in jail for default. About forty persons suffered the latter alternative.

The Backuses were of the forty. The mother was advanced in years and was suffering in sickness when the officers of law took her at nine o'clock at night from before her fire where she was reading in the Bible, and in the late October cold and rain carried her seventeen miles, and placed her in a cell in the county jail.

After thirteen days of bodily suffering, but such spiritual consolation as led her to say that "the cheerless cell was beautiful as a palace," she was released through some unknown friend who paid the charges against her. Her son Samuel had a longer imprisonment. The mother's letter to Isaac after her release was a noble expression of Christian womanhood.

Isaac had betaken himself to Massachusetts, for he was yet a Congregationalist, and he hoped to find brethren among whom godliness would not be criminal. "Led by the disposal of Providence," as he says, he reached the precinct of Middleborough, which was to be his base of operation for threescore years. He describes as follows : —

"A majority of the church members in the precinct favored a New Light preacher, while a majority of the voters opposed such an one, so that they had enjoyed but little preaching for nearly a year; and a number of the brethren, as they could not get letters of dismission from their churches, resolved to separate therefrom, and worship by themselves. The first time they met was the Lord's day before I came into the place, unknown to them and they to me. A sovereign God was pleased to accompany the labors of so unworthy an instrument with

such a blessing on the people that it would not avail for them to oppose my preaching. Divine truth seemed to flow through my soul like a river, and it was easier to speak than to refrain. Therefore the committee came to invite me, only they would have me yield to be examined and approbated by neighboring ministers, and so come in regularly. I told them I was willing to be examined as much as they pleased, but I should not leave it to them whether I should preach the gospel or not, neither should I allow the precinct to lead in calling a minister, instead of the church of God. This did not please them, yet they invited me to preach to them notwithstanding. This I did for about two months, and then two of said committee forbade my preaching on the precinct's account any longer. And a few weeks after they met and voted a sum of money for to set up other worship, and taxed me to the value of ten shillings sterling toward it. And Feb. 6, 1749, their collector seized me for refusing to pay it, and held me as a prisoner about three hours, till one of their party called him out, and paid him the money. This is the best reward that they as a precinct ever offered me for two months' preaching."

Leaving, therefore, the precinct church, he became the pastor of the seceded portion of it, called Separatists, where he continued some eight years in the Congregationalist connection.

Then "having through much anguish of soul and against all worldly interest" first accepted immersion as baptism, and four years later adopted the Baptist faith in full, he became, in 1756, in the same place, the pastor of a Baptist church of six members, the sole representative of its denomination on a field a hundred miles long and nearly fifty wide. He was now allied with the sect everywhere spoken against, and became at once a leader in their struggle to ob-

tain, not for themselves alone, but for all, the rights of conscience. These struggles were soon to take organized form, and place upon Mr. Backus official responsibilities.

In 1769 the Warren Association, which then represented all the Baptist churches of New England, appointed a committee, of which he was a member, to collect facts as to the oppressions which those not of the state churches were suffering, and to prepare petitions for redress to be presented to the governments of Massachusetts and Connecticut. The committee was active through the year, and found itself loaded with the complaints of the sufferers, while efforts for their relief continued to be futile.

At the meeting the next year it was resolved unanimously to "send to the British court for help, if it could not be obtained in America." Rev. John Davis, of Boston, an excellent young minister from the freer atmosphere of Pennsylvania, was appointed agent of the churches, to lead in measures for securing release from the disabilities, taxes, and prosecutions imposed by the state establishments. Mr. Backus was associated with him, and gave efficient aid in the movement.

A petition addressed to the government of Massachusetts, by this agency and the committee above mentioned, will show the grounds on which they made their appeals for justice;—

"To the Honorable, the Lieutenant-Governor, the Honorable his Majesty's Representatives, in General Court Assembled :—

"The petition of the Baptist Committee of Grievances, acting in the name and by the appointment of the Baptist churches, met in association at Bellingham in this province, the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth days of September last, humbly sheweth :—

"That although the Baptists have been repeatedly disappointed in their addresses to the General Court, and have not received that relief from their distresses which they humbly conceive all our people are entitled to as men and Christians and subjects of a free government, yet very unwilling to leave any means untried, and hoping all things from this Court,—we, the committee aforesaid, with great earnestness and seriousness, do recommend ourselves to you, gentlemen, whom we consider as the guardians of our rights and privileges, as well religious as civil, the protectors of the injured, the fathers of our common country; and beg leave to say that we are encouraged in this our address from the consideration of the rights of mankind having been so well defined in the votes of your honorable House, by which we are taught to think 'that no taxation can be equitable where such restraints are laid upon the taxed as take from him the liberty of giving his own money freely.'

"This being true, permit us to ask with what equity is our property taken from us, not only without our consent, but violently, contrary to our wills, and for such purposes as we cannot, in faithfulness to that stewardship with which God hath intrusted us, favor. Permit us, therefore, to lay before this honorable Court the grievances of which we complain, and pray your friendly as well as legislative interposition, that our brethren may be saved from threatening ruin, who have suffered much in their persons and estates, to the great disquietude of their minds and distress of their small and chargeable families.

“And these evils have arisen from some of the laws of this province, which are ecclesiastical in their nature, and bear upon us, and, as we think, deprive us of a charter privilege ; especially one law made in favor of the proprietors of the town of Ashfield, in the county of Hampshire, which is contrary to, and in respect to that town, supersedes all Acts of the General Court heretofore enacted and declared to be in favor of the Baptists. In consequence of which law, and by a power granted in the same to the proprietors of Ashfield aforesaid, three hundred and ninety-eight acres of our land have been sold to build, and remove, and repair when moved, a meeting-house in which we have no part, though our money helped to build it, and to settle and support a minister whom we cannot hear. The lands were valued at three hundred and sixty-three pounds thirteen shillings, lawful money, and were sold for nineteen pounds three shillings, lawful money. Part of the lands aforesaid belonged to the Rev. Ebenezer Smith, a regularly ordained Baptist minister, who, together with his father and others, their brethren, in the last Indian war, built at their own expense a fort, and were a frontier ; and this they did without any help from any quarter ; for which we beg leave to say that they deserve, at least, the common privileges of the subjects of the crown of England. Part of the said lands had been laid out for a burying-place, and they have taken from us our dead. They have also sold a dwelling-house and orchard, and pulled up our apple-trees, and thrown down our fences, and made our fields waste places.

“Permit us further to add, that the Act of the General Court, made with design to favor us, and for the same purpose hath been renewed from time to time, is attended with such difficulties as render it ineffectual in many instances, and by no means sufficient to answer the good purpose for which we are willing to believe the honorable court intended it. The difficulties arising from this quarter, of which we complain, we are ready to lay before the House whenever it shall please them to call upon us.

"We must beg your indulgence while we recite one thing more, which we deem hard, and that is, a proviso in the above-mentioned law or Act of General Court, by which no Baptist can avail himself even of that law in new-settled towns; and we are thereby virtually prevented from settling in such towns.

"Should we go through with an enumeration of all our grievances, we must take up too much of the time of this honorable court, which we are unwilling to do. We therefore pray the General Court to relieve the following particulars, viz :—

"1. To repeal a law entitled, 'An Act in Addition to an Act for Erecting the New Plantation called Huntstown,' in the county of Hampshire, into a town by the name of Ashfield, and restore the lands which have been taken from them to support the ministers settled by law, and give them damages for the many and great injuries they have been made to suffer.

"2. To enable our brethren, in different parts of the province, to recover damages for the losses they have been made to sustain on a religious account.

"3. To grant perpetual exemption to all Baptists and their congregations from all ministerial rates whatever, according to the full intent and meaning of the charter of the province, that we may all enjoy full liberty of conscience, as others, his Majesty's subjects, of this province; and also to disannul all such rates heretofore laid on any of our people in the government. And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

"Signed in behalf of the whole Committee.

"SAMUEL STILLMAN.

"HEZEKIAH SMITH.

"JOHN DAVIS."

From petitions similarly addressed by the Baptist citizens of Ashfield, whose efforts to obtain their rights were fruitless through successive years, we copy the following :—

“We would inform his Excellency and your Honors, that one half of us settled in this town before the last war (which was then called Huntstown), and built a fort, and defended ourselves three years' time, before we had any help by soldiers from authority, excepting ten men for ten days to gather our corn; in which time we could do little else in summer but guard ourselves, and scout in the woods to see if we could make discovery of the enemy, and thereby were some guard to the towns below us. After the war was over, we being of the persuasion that is called Anabaptist, proceeded to settle ourselves in a church form, and to settle a minister, we then being by far the major part of the inhabitants of the town. He was ordained by the assistance of three neighboring ministers of the same constitution; and we were about building a meeting-house, but were forced to desist by means of there settling in town a number of men of a contrary persuasion, who, by the help of some few that were here before, and other proprietors, have by a major vote raised money to build another meeting-house which we have no privilege of, and settled another minister, and given him a large settlement and salary, and compel us to pay our equal proportion with them, so that even our own minister is compelled to pay theirs, or we for him. By reason of which oppression, together with the distresses of the war aforesaid, we are brought under distressful circumstances, which, we think, cry aloud for some pity to be shown to us; for we have our own minister to provide for according to our ability, and have yearly our money taken away from us, or our land sold at an out-cry to support their worship, so that we have already suffered extremely. And they have also voted four pounds, lawful money, upon each right, to finish their meeting-house and to support their minister, which if we are obliged to pay, we see nothing but that we, or many of us, must be turned out from our houses and lands. We pray, therefore, that his Excellency and your Honors would take our distressed case into your wise consideration, and free us and our lands from paying any more

toward the maintenance of the minister, or finishing the meeting-house, of a society we do not belong unto ; we being willing to pay our province taxes, and all others, except the above mentioned. So pray your humble petitioners and loyal subjects.

"N. B. — There are upward of ninety souls that attend our meeting on Lord's days.

"Dated, Ashfield, May 24, 1768."

Two years later they sent in another petition, in which, after narrating various futile attempts to obtain relief, they proceed as follows :—

"Therefore our lands were set at public vendue, and sold for a very small part of their value. They have sold mowing ground, winter grain, orcharding, one poor man's dwelling-house, and our burying-place — and all this for a rate which we cannot in conscience pay ; so that we are not only deprived of liberty of conscience, which our most gracious sovereign has granted us in common with others his loyal subjects (which we have a right to, in religion and reason), but we are in a great measure disinherited, and are in a fair way to be turned naked into the wide world.

"We humbly beg leave to say these things are hard, very hard ; for if we may not settle and support a minister agreeable to our own conscience, where is liberty of conscience ?

"And if we may be allowed that liberty, which is most reasonable, by what law, or with what equity, are we forced to pay for the settlement of another, with whom we cannot in conscience join, or to build a meeting-house for a society that we do not belong to ? . . .

"We plead for nothing but liberty of conscience and charter privilege. We humbly pray your Honors to take these things into your wise consideration, and show some pity to your distressed petitioners.

"Dated 1770."

Mr. Davis was removed from the agency by death soon after his appointment, and in 1772 Mr. Backus was chosen by the association to continue the service. He assumed this leadership with a decided opposition to the legislative attempts successively made in that period to relieve persons unjustly taxed and prosecuted for the support of state churches. The legislation required certificates to be obtained, on difficult and humiliating conditions, for presentation to assessors in order to claim exemption. "And if the unsympathizing authorities neglected their duty, or even violated these laws, no penalty was affixed to this neglect or transgression." Hence the extortions, fines, seizures, and sacrifices of ill-spared property went on.

Mr. Backus, with a committee appointed to coöperate with him, soon issued the following circular to the Baptist churches : —

"BELOVED FRIENDS : These lines are to acquaint you that five of our committee, appointed to take care for and consult the general good of the Baptist churches in this country, especially as to their union and liberties, met with me at Boston, on May 5, 1773, when we received accounts that several of our friends at Mendon have lately had their goods forcibly taken from them for ministerial rates, and that three more of them at Chelmsford (two of whom were members of the Baptist church there), were seized for the same cause, last winter, and carried prisoners to Concord jail ; so that liberty of conscience, the greatest and most important article of all liberty, is evidently not allowed, as it ought to be in this country, not even by the very men who are now making loud complaints of encroachments upon their own liberties. And as it appears to us clear

that the root of all these difficulties, and that which has done amazing mischief in our land, is civil rulers' assuming a power to make any laws to govern ecclesiastical affairs, or to use any force to support ministers ; therefore, these are to desire you to consider whether it is not our duty to strike so directly at this root as to refuse any conformity to their laws about such affairs, even so much as giving any certificates to their assessors. We are fully persuaded that if we were all united in bearing what others of our friends might, for a little while, suffer on this account, a less sum than has already been expended with lawyers and courts, on such accounts, would carry us through the trial, and, if we should be able to treat our oppressors with a Christian temper, would make straining upon others, under pretense of supporting religion, appear so odious that they could not get along with it. We desire you would consider of these matters, and send in your mind to the assembly of our churches, which is to meet at Medfield, on the seventh of September next, when it will be proposed to have these matters, both as to principle and facts, as clearly stated as we can, and to see if all our churches cannot agree upon publishing our joint testimony for true liberty, and against the oppressions of the present day.

“ From yours in gospel bonds,

“ ISAAC BACKUS, *Agent*.

“ By advice of the Committee.

“ P. S.— Our charter gives other denominations no more power to tax the Baptists, than it does the Baptists to tax others ; and in the town of Boston they have all along had this equality, so that there has not been any occasion for one society to give certificates to another ; and why may not the country enjoy the same liberty ? ”

The response to this circular, and the action which followed, are detailed in a letter to Rev. Dr. Stennett, of London : —

"MIDDLEBOROUGH, Oct. 9, 1773.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR: Last May our committee were called together at Boston, when we had late accounts of the sufferings of our brethren in sundry places, and in violation of the pedobaptists' own laws, upon which we wrote to all our churches to consider and to give their mind upon the affair. Accordingly, they sent in their thoughts to our association at Medfield, Tuesday, September 7; and though we were agreed that our legislature had no right to impose religious taxes upon us, yet some doubted the expediency of our now refusing any compliance with their laws in that respect; and since we were not all of a judgment in this case, they stood against our coming to any vote upon it, lest our want of union should give an advantage to our adversaries. Thus matters labored all day Wednesday, until many of the brethren became very uneasy about being thus held back. But on Tuesday morning, Mr. Stillman, who had been against our coming to a vote, brought in the following paper, which was unanimously adopted:—

"1. That the mind of the association, respecting giving or not giving certificates, be taken by written vote, in order to confine the difference which subsists among us on this matter, in the association.

"2. That those churches that agree to neglect the law for the future, shall, in a spirit of meekness, plead, as the reason, that they cannot in conscience countenance any human laws that interfere in the management of the kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world.

"3. That the churches which think it expedient to give certificates for the present, be advised by letter how many are of a contrary mind, and be desired to consider the matter against the next association, and to unite with their brethren if possible.

"4. That the churches allow each other entire liberty, without any hard thoughts one of another.

"5. That all the churches which shall be called to suffer through the year, shall transmit an account of such sufferings

to their agent, to be made use of by him as may be thought best to subserve the common cause.

“‘6. That our true state, with what we have transacted at this association, be sent to our agents in England, and their opinion be requested by the next meeting of the churches.

“‘7. That if any are called to suffer, their sister churches be applied to, to assist them in their trouble.’

“When we came to act upon the first of these articles, there appeared thirty-four elders and brethren against giving any more certificates, six for it, and three at a loss how to act. Then it was voted by all that an appeal to the public, which I had read in part to them, should be examined by our committee, and then published. And our association was dismissed in a very comfortable and happy manner, and all seemed well pleased with what was done. The following week our committee met at Boston, and deliberately examined and approved of our appeal, a copy of which I now send you. We were privately encouraged in this attempt for religious liberty by several members of both houses of our great General Court; and the state of people's minds of various ranks through New England is such that I cannot but hope to obtain our freedom without a necessity of appealing to his Majesty. The use of force in religious affairs is become odious to great numbers besides our own denomination, and that is increasing very fast.

“Thus, dear sir, I have given you as concise and just an account of our state as I can; and we request the best advice from yourself, Dr. Slewalen, and Mr. Wallin that you can give us. We are greatly obliged to you all for the friendship and favors you have already shown us, especially concerning the case of Ashfield, for which we hope and pray that God may abundantly reward you.”

The appeal mentioned in this letter is not now in print, but it is described by Dr. Hovey as a pamphlet of sixty-two pages, discussing the difference

between civil and ecclesiastical government, and the oppressions which were inflicted by confounding the two. He exposes the calumny that opposition to the religious taxes sprang from penuriousness, declaring: "Many of us have expended ten or twenty times as much in setting up and supporting that worship which we believe to be right, as it would have cost us to have continued in the fashionable way." The address closes with the following reasons why the Baptists should refuse longer actively to obey the unjust laws in the matter of pretended exemption of dissenters: "(1) Because to give certificates implies an acknowledgment that civil rulers have a right to set up one religious sect after another, which they have not; (2) Because civil rulers are not representatives in religious matters, and therefore have no right to impose religious taxes; (3) Because such practice emboldens the actors therein to assume God's prerogative, and to judge the hearts of those who do not put into their mouths; (4) Because the church is to be presented as a chaste virgin to Christ; and to place her trust and love upon any other for temporal support, is playing the harlot, and so the way to destroy all religion; (5) Because the practice tends to envy, hypocrisy, and confusion, and so to the ruin of civil society."

To Governor Samuel Adams, the great leader of the revolt against British taxation without representation, Mr. Backus wrote this letter, January, 1774:—

"To Mr. Samuel Adams.

"HONORED SIR: As you have long exerted yourself, and improved your abilities with great applause, for civil liberty, I beg leave, though a stranger to your person, to address you upon the cause of religious freedom. I fully concur with your grand maxim, that 'it is essential to liberty that representation and taxation go together.' Well, then, since people do not vote for representatives in our legislature from ecclesiastical qualifications, but only by virtue of those which are of a civil and worldly nature, how can representatives thus chosen have any right to impose ecclesiastical taxes? Yet they have assumed and long exercised such a power. For they assumed a power to compel each town and parish in this province to settle a minister, and have empowered the majority of the inhabitants to give away as much of their neighbors' estates as they please to their minister; and if they refuse to yield it to them, then to take it by force. And I am bold in it that taxes laid by the British Parliament upon America are not more contrary to civil freedom, than these taxes are to the very nature of liberty of conscience, which is an essential article in our charter; for certainly the discharge of a good conscience toward God as much concerns the support of his worship, as does the attendance upon it, though modern nations would confine it to the latter. Yea, many take away our money to support a way contrary to our consciences; and after they have got it, reflect upon us for not supporting our own way better. And though many pretend that the case is not as I have now represented, because Acts from time to time have been made to exempt our denomination and others from taxes to the established worship, yet if we examine, we shall find that this exemption is just like the proceedings of the power at home in taking off some of the taxes which they had laid upon this country, while they still claim the power to tax us when they please. Two thousand dollars will not make good the damages that the Baptists in this province have sustained within these ten years by being taxed to the other party, and

by suing for their rights before judges and jurors who were of that party. . . . And now, for no other crime than refusing last year to yield any further obedience to that taxing law, which is unjustly called an Act to Exempt our Denomination from Taxes, a number of people who have been my steady hearers for twenty years are, by Judge Oliver's direction, taxed to his minister.

"Our reasons for the above refusal I here send you in print; and as the Act aforesaid is now out of date, I hope, sir, that you will give proof both to the court and to the world that you regard the religious as well as the civil rights of your countrymen; that so large a number of as peaceable people, and as hearty friends to their country, as any in the land, may not be forced to carry their complaints before those who would be glad to hear that the Legislature of Massachusetts deny to their fellow-servants that liberty which they so earnestly insist upon for themselves. A word to the wise is sufficient. Therefore I add no more, but am,

"Your friend and humble servant,

"ISAAC BACKUS."

The next month the energetic agent of the suffering, in view of new and severe persecutions, hastened to address to the Massachusetts government the following petition:—

"The Memorial and Petition of Isaac Backus, agent for the Baptist churches in the province, humbly sheweth: That whereas, by the charter of this province, liberty of conscience is granted to our denomination equally with other Protestants, and it is declared to the first General Court, after the charter was received, that the magistrate is most properly the officer of human society, and that a Christian, by conformity to this or that way of worship, does not break the terms on which he is to enjoy the benefits of human society, and that a man has a right unto his life, his estate, his liberty, and his family,

notwithstanding such non-conformity, which declaration was then received with the thanks of the House of Representatives (*Magnalia*, B. 7, pp. 28, 29); yet it has been a common custom, ever since, to impose taxes upon the inhabitants in general in every town and precinct in this province, to support pedo-baptist worship; and though there have been sundry temporary Acts made to exempt our denomination from such taxes, yet great numbers of them have, from time to time, been taxed and despoiled of their rights; and I have direct information that eighteen men of the inhabitants of Warwick, who belong to the Baptist society in Royalston, and had the same certified to the assessors of Warwick, last June, yet were seized, last week, for the minister's rate of that town, and carried prisoners to Northhampton jail, by which they are deprived of their precious rights; and their dear families, in a new country, are exposed to suffering greatly for want of their help.

"This is therefore to beseech your Excellency and Honors, as guardians of the rights of your people, immediately to order these men to be set at liberty, and that reparation be made of the damages they have sustained; and also to take some effectual methods, as in your wisdom you shall see fit, that for the future all persons within this province, who shall demean themselves as good members of civil society, may not be despoiled of the aforesaid rights, under a pretense of supporting religious worship, but that all persons, who shall presume thus to encroach upon the rights of their neighbors, may be punished according to the demerit of their crimes. And your petitioner, as in duty bound, shall ever pray.

"ISAAC BACKUS.

"*Middleborough, Feb. 15, 1774.*"

Of the effect of this petition, he gave to a pastor in London this account:—

"I have been called to address our legislature in behalf of a number of our friends, who were seized the second week in

February, and carried, in that extreme season, forty miles, and confined in jail, for a pedobaptist minister's rate ; though most of them had, for many years, been of the Baptist denomination, and had lately moved into that town. The president of his Majesty's council, and several other men of note of both Houses, gave their opinion in favor of the first article in the prayer of the petition ; but the majority turned the case against it. Upon which some friends in Boston sent to our friends in prison, to bail themselves out, and sue for their rights in executive courts, which they did, after being confined fifteen days. Upon the other article of providing a more effectual remedy against such things for the future, the House of Representatives sent out a committee upon it, who conferred with Mr. Stillman and others of our committee in Boston ; and they framed an Act more favorable than they had done before, which passed both Houses. But in the contest about Judge Oliver, the court prorogued so abruptly that it was not laid before the Governor, so that there is no Act in force at all in the province to exempt us from taxes to their ministers. But the more they stir about it, the more light gains ; so that my hope of deliverance in due time increases."

Long and serious was this contest for religious freedom in New England. Oppressions and protests, involved and ineffective legislation, petitions and appeals to the authorities in this country and to king and counsel in the mother country, were kept up through the century. Mr. Backus continued, until his death in 1806, to voice the murmur of the un-resting, ceaseless agitation. His denomination, growing in its influence, held with steady unanimity to the use of every legitimate means for securing the personal and corporate rights of every citizen and society, irrespective of religious views or connec-

tions. Statesmen, and Christians of different names, came gradually to see the justice and importance of these principles ; but so late as 1820, in a Massachusetts convention for revising the constitution, Baptist members having introduced a resolution for equal religious liberty, Daniel Webster, who was a member, opposed it, saying : "The constitution, as it is, is good enough for me." Of the three hundred and sixty-five who voted on the resolution, a change of four would have carried it, but it was lost, and the oppression went on.

Finally Massachusetts, that for two hundred years had led in the oppression, gave to it the death-blow. In 1833 the State so amended its Bill of Rights as to sever the connection of State and Church, and secure impartial religious freedom. The little seed planted in Rhode Island two hundred years before had now evolved the trees whose shade and fruits were falling on all New England and the whole enlarged sisterhood of States. But we must go back a little way, and study another evolution from the same seed and of similar history,—the growth of this freedom in the field of our national polity.

CHAPTER XI.

CONSTITUTIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM THROUGHOUT AMERICA.

APPEALS TO CONTINENTAL AND COLONIAL CONGRESSES.

NO sooner did the American colonies, driven by British oppression, propose to consolidate into a union for better resistance, than the question of religious liberty claimed its place in their counsels. Established churches had been the policy in most of the colonies, and restricted liberty was instituted in all of them except Rhode Island; yet there were many citizens who were determined that a general government should not grow up clothed with the power which had obliged them to fly from their mother countries.

When, therefore, the first continental congresses met in New York and Philadelphia, representatives of this sentiment made themselves present and heard.

The Congress in Philadelphia, in 1774, was a body of delegates from all the colonies except Georgia. In it were Washington, Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Roger Sherman, Philip and William Livingston, John Jay, Dr. Witherspoon, of Princeton College, and many

others whose names are historic. Its purpose was to secure union of effort, and judicious measures for gaining relief from British oppression.

The Baptists and Friends and others, who were suffering from infractions of their religious liberty in the colonies, felt that this Congress was a proper place to seek equal justice in this matter, as well as in others; and their leading men who met that year at the college commencement in Providence, and in the Warren and Pennsylvania associations, appointed their agent, Mr. Backus, and coöperating committees to wait on the congress, and submit their grievances for consideration. The committee of New England and New York were President Manning, of Rhode Island, Dr. Hezekiah Smith, of Massachusetts, and Dr. John Gano, of New York. The Pennsylvania committee was a large one, in which Reverends William Rogers, William Van Horne, Morgan Edwards, Samuel Jones, and numerous gentlemen not ministers, were members.

Assembling in Philadelphia, the first efforts of the agent and committees were directed to securing the sympathy and coöperation of individual members of Congress. The Massachusetts delegates were seen, and an informal consultation with them and others was secured. Of this conference, Mr. Backus enumerates, beside the Baptist committees, "Thomas Cushing, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Robert Treat Paine, Massachusetts delegates; Stephen Hopkins and Samuel Ward, of Rhode Island; James Kinzie,

of New Jersey ; Joseph Galloway and Thomas Mifflin, of Pennsylvania, as members of Congress ; Mr. Rhodes, mayor of Philadelphia ; Israel and James Pemberton and Joseph Fox, Quakers, and others."

The conference was opened by President Manning in a short address, and the reading of the following Memorial : —

"It has been said by a celebrated writer in politics, that but two things were worth contending for,—religion and liberty. For the latter we are at present nobly exerting ourselves through all this extensive continent ; and surely no one whose bosom feels the patriot glow in behalf of civil liberty, can remain torpid to the more ennobling flame of religious freedom.

"The free exercise of private judgment and the unalienable rights of conscience are of too high a rank and dignity to be subjected to the decrees of councils, or the imperfect laws of fallible legislators. The merciful Father of mankind is alone the Lord of conscience. Establishments may be enabled to confer worldly distinctions and secular importance. They may make hypocrites, but cannot create Christians. They have been reared by craft or power, but liberty never flourished perfectly under their control. That liberty, virtue, and public happiness can be supported without them, this flourishing province [Pennsylvania] is a glorious testimony, and a view of it would be sufficient to invalidate all the most elaborate arguments ever adduced in support of them. Happy in the enjoyment of these undoubted rights, and conscious of their high import, every lover of mankind must be desirous, as far as opportunity offers, of extending and securing the enjoyment of these inestimable blessings.

"These reflections have arisen from considering the unhappy situation of our brethren, the Baptists, in the province of Massachusetts Bay, for whom we now appear as advocates ; and from the important light in which liberty in general is now be-

held, we trust our representation will be effectual. The province of Massachusetts Bay, being settled by persons who fled from civil and religious oppression, it would be natural to imagine them deeply impressed with the value of liberty, and nobly scorning a domination over conscience ; but such was the complexion of the times, they fell from the unhappy state of being oppressed, to the more deplorable and ignoble one of becoming oppressors.

“But these things being passed over, we intend to begin with the charter obtained at the happy restoration. This charter grants ‘that there shall be liberty of conscience allowed in the worship of God to all Christians, except papists, inhabiting this province, or territory ;’ or, in the words of the late Governor Hutchinson : ‘We find nothing in the new charter of an ecclesiastical constitution. Liberty of conscience is granted to all except papists.’ The first general court that met under this charter returned their thanks for the following sentiments delivered before them : ‘That the magistrate is most properly the officer of human society ; that a Christian by non-conformity to this or that imposed way of worship, does not break the terms upon which he is to enjoy the benefits of human society ; and that a man has a right to his estate, his liberty, and his family, notwithstanding his non-conformity.’ And on this declaration the historian who mentions it plumes himself, as if the whole future system of an impartial administration was to begin. By laws made during the first charter, such persons only were entitled to vote for civil rulers as were church-members. This might be thought by some to give a shadow of ecclesiastical power ; but by the present [charter], ‘every freeholder of thirty pounds sterling per annum, and every other inhabitant who has forty pounds personal estate, are voters for representatives.’ So that here seems an evident foundation to presume they are only elected for the preservation of civil rights, and the management of temporal concerns. Nevertheless, they soon began to assume the power of establishing Congregational worship, and taxed all the inhabitants

toward its support ; and no Act was passed to exempt other denominations from the year 1692 to 1727, when the Episcopalians were permitted to enjoy their rights.

“The first Act for the relief of the Baptists was in 1728, when their polls only were exempted from taxation, and not their estates, and then only of such as lived within five miles of a Baptist meeting-house. The next year, 1729, thirty persons were apprehended and confined in Bristol jail, — some church-men, some Friends, but most of the Baptist denomination. Roused by these oppressions, the Baptists and Quakers petitioned the General Court, being determined if they could not obtain redress, to apply to his Majesty in council. Wherefore, the same year a law was passed exempting their estates and polls, but clogged, however, with a limitation for less than five years. At the expiration of this Act, in 1733, our brethren were obliged again to apply to the General Assembly, upon which a third Act was passed (1734), exempting Baptists from paying ministerial taxes. This third Act was more clear, accurate, and better drawn than any of the former ; but for want of a penalty on the returning officer, badly executed, subjecting our brethren to many hardships and oppressions. This Act expired in 1740, and another was made for seven years, but still liable to the same defects. In 1747 the Baptists and Friends, wearied with fruitless applications to the Assemblies, once more proposed applying at home for relief, when the laws exempting them were reenacted for ten years, the longest space ever granted.

“To show what the liberty was that these unhappy people enjoyed, it will be necessary, though we aim as much as possible at brevity, just to mention that if at any time a Baptist sued a collector for the breach of these laws, any damages he recovered were laid on the town, and the Baptists residing therein were thereby obliged to pay their proportionable part toward his indemnification. At this time such an instance occurred in the case of Sturbridge, when Jonathan Perry sued

the collector, Jonathan Mason, and the damages were sustained by the town, though the Baptists in town-meeting dissented. And here it may not be improper to observe that the judges and jury are under the strongest bias to determine for the defendants. In the beginning of the year 1753 an Act was passed, breaking in upon the time limited, enacting that 'no minister or member of an Anabaptist church shall be esteemed qualified to give certificates, other than such as shall have been obtained from three other churches commonly called Anabaptist, in this or the neighboring provinces, a certificate from each respectively, that they esteem such church of their denomination, and that they conscientiously believe them to be Anabaptists.'

"But not to take too much of your time, we would here just observe that all the laws have been made temporary, and without any penalty on the collector or assessors for the breach of the law; and come more particularly to speak of the law passed at the last June session, as it has been generally understood to be so framed as to take away complaint, and establish a general liberty of conscience. This Act is like all the others, temporary, and indeed limited to a shorter duration than most of them, being only for three years. It is without any penalty on the breach of it, and an additional trouble and expense is enjoined by requiring the certificates every year (though in some others obtaining one certificate during the existence of the law was sufficient), and concludes thus: 'That nothing in this Act shall be construed to exempt any proprietor of any new township from paying his part and portion with the major part of the other proprietors of such new township, in settling a minister and building a meeting-house, which hath been or shall be required as a condition of their grant.'

"And here we would just add a few words relative to the affairs of Ashfield. On the twenty-sixth day of December next, three lots of land belonging to people of our denomination will be exposed for sale,—one of them for the payment of so small a

sum as ten shillings eleven pence. Although we have given but two instances of oppression under the above laws, yet a great number can be produced, well attested, when called for.

“Upon this short statement of facts, we would observe that the charter must be looked upon by every impartial eye to be infringed, so soon as any law was passed for the establishment of any particular mode of worship. All Protestants are placed upon the same footing, and no law whatever could disannul so essential a part of a charter intended to communicate the blessings of a free government to his Majesty's subjects. Under the first charter, as was hinted, church-membership conferred the rights of a freeman ; but by the second, the possession of property was the foundation. Therefore, how could it be supposed that the collective body of the people intended to confer any other power upon their representatives than that of making laws relative to property and the concerns of this life ?

“Men unite in society, according to the great Mr. Locke, ‘with an intention in every one the better to preserve himself, his liberty, and property. The power of the society, or legislature constituted by them, can never be supposed to extend any further than the common good, but is obliged to secure every one's property.’ To give laws, to receive obedience, to compel with the sword, belong to none but the civil magistrate ; and on this ground we affirm that the magistrate's power extends not to the establishing of any articles of faith or forms of worship by force of laws ; for laws are of no force without penalties. The care of souls cannot belong to the civil magistrate, because his power consists only in outward force ; but pure and saving religion consists in the inward persuasion of the mind, without which nothing can be acceptable to God.

“It is a just position, and cannot be too firmly established, that we can have no property in that which another may take, when he pleases, to himself ; neither can we have the proper enjoyment of our religious liberties (which must be acknowledged to be of greater value), if held by the same unjust and

capricious tenure ; and this must appear to be the case when temporary laws pretend to grant relief so very inadequate.

“ It may now be asked, What is the liberty desired ? The answer is, As the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, and religion is a concern between God and the soul, with which no human authority can intermeddle, consistently with the principles of Christianity, and according to the dictates of Protestantism, we claim and expect the liberty of worshiping God according to our consciences, not being obliged to support a ministry we cannot attend, whilst we demean ourselves as faithful subjects. These we have an undoubted right to, as men, as Christians, and by charter as inhabitants of Massachusetts Bay.”

After Dr. Manning had taken his seat, Mr. Backus says : —

“ The delegates from Massachusetts used all their arts to represent that we complained without reason. John Adams made a long speech, and Samuel Adams another, both of whom said : ‘ There is, indeed, an ecclesiastical establishment in our province, but a very slender one, hardly to be called an establishment.’ When they would permit, we brought up facts, which they tried to explain away, but could not. Then they shifted their plea, and asserted that our General Court was clear of blame, and had always been ready to hear our complaints, and to grant all reasonable help, whatever might have been done by executive officers ; and S. Adams and R. T. Paine spent an hour more on this plea. When they stopped, I told them I was sorry to have any accusations to bring against the government which I belonged to, and which I would gladly serve to the utmost of my power, but I must say that facts proved the contrary to their plea ; and gave a short account of our legislature’s treatment of Ashfield, which was very puzzling to them. In their pleas, S. Adams tried to represent that regular Baptists were quite easy among us, and more than once insinuated that these complaints came from enthusiasts who made it

a merit to suffer persecution; and, also, that enemies to the colonies had a hand therein. Paine said: 'There was nothing of conscience in the matter, it was only a contending about paying a little money; and also that we would not be neighborly, and let them know who we were, which was all they wanted, and they would readily exempt us.'

"In answer I told them they might call it enthusiasm or what they pleased; but I freely own, before all these gentlemen, that it is absolutely a point of conscience with me; for I cannot give in the certificates they require, without implicitly acknowledging that power in man which I believe belongs only to God. This shocked them, and Cushing said: 'It quite altered the case; for if it were a point of conscience, he had nothing to say to that,' and the conference, of about four hours' continuance, closed with their promising to do what they could for our relief; though, to deter us from thinking of their coming upon equal footing with us, as to religion, John Adams, at one time, said we might as well expect a change in the solar system as to expect they would give up their establishment; and, at another time, he said we might as soon expect they would submit to the Port Bill, the Regulating Bill, and the Murder Bill, as to give up that establishment, which he and his friend, in the beginning of their plea, called a very slender thing. Such absurdities does religious tyranny produce in great men."

The prejudiced account which John Adams wrote of this conference shows the spirit of the standing order in Massachusetts, of which he was an immovable pillar. He writes:—

"Governor Hopkins and Governor Ward, of Rhode Island, came to our lodgings, and said to us that President Manning, of Rhode Island College, and Mr. Backus, of Massachusetts, were in town, and had conversed with some gentlemen in Philadelphia, who wished to communicate to us a little business,

and wished we would meet them at six in the evening at Carpenter's Hall. Whether they explained their affairs more particularly to any of my colleagues, I know not ; but I had no idea of the design. We all went at the hour, and to my great surprise found the hall almost full of people, and a great number of Quakers seated at the long table with their broad-brimmed beavers on their heads. We were invited to seats among them, and informed that they had received complaints from some Anabaptists and some Friends in Massachusetts against certain laws of that province, restrictive of the liberty of conscience, and some instances were mentioned in the General Court, and in the courts of justice, in which Friends and Baptists had been grievously oppressed. I know not how my colleagues felt, but I own I was greatly surprised and somewhat indignant, being, like my friend Chase, of a temper naturally quick and warm, at seeing our state and her delegates thus summoned before a self-created tribunal, which was neither legal nor constitutional.

"Israel Pemberton, a Quaker of large property and more intrigue, began to speak, and said that Congress was here endeavoring to form a union of the colonies, but there were difficulties in the way, and none of more importance than liberty of conscience. The laws of New England, and particularly of Massachusetts, were inconsistent with it, for they not only compelled men to pay for the building of churches and support of ministers, but to go to some known religious assembly on first days, etc., and that he and his friends were desirous of engaging us to assure them that our state would repeal all those laws, and place things as they were in Pennsylvania.

"A suspicion instantly arose in my mind, which I have ever believed to have been well founded, that this artful Jesuit — for I had been apprised before of his character — was endeavoring to avail himself of this opportunity to break up the Congress, or at least to withdraw the Quakers and the governing part of Pennsylvania from us ; for, at that time, by means of most unequal representation, the Quakers had a majority in their House of Assembly, and, by consequence, the whole power of the

state in their hands. I arose, and spoke in answer to him. The substance of what I said was that we had no authority to bind our constituents to any such proposals; that the laws of Massachusetts were the most mild and equitable establishment of religion that was known in the world, if indeed they could be called an establishment; that it would be in vain for us to enter into any conference on such a subject, for we knew beforehand our constituents would disavow all we could do or say for the satisfaction of those who invited us to this meeting; that the people of Massachusetts were as religious and conscientious as the people of Pennsylvania; that their conscience dictated to them that it was their duty to support those laws, and therefore the very liberty of conscience which Mr. Pemberton invoked, would demand indulgence for the tender conscience of the people of Massachusetts, and allow them to preserve their laws; that it might be depended on, this was a point that could not be carried; that I would not deceive them by insinuating the faintest hope, for I knew they might as well turn the heavenly bodies out of their annual and diurnal courses, as the people of Massachusetts at the present day from their meeting-house and Sunday laws.

“Pemberton made no reply but this: ‘O, sir, pray don’t urge liberty of conscience in favor of such laws!’ If I had but known the particular complaints which were to be alleged, and if Pemberton had not broken irregularly into the midst of things, it might have been better, perhaps, to postpone this declaration. However, the gentlemen proceeded, and stated the particular cases of oppression which were alleged in our general and executive courts. It happened that Mr. Cushing and Mr. Samuel Adams had been present in the General Court when the petitions had been under deliberation, and they explained the whole so clearly that every reasonable man must have been satisfied. Mr. Paine and I had been concerned at the bar in every action in the executive courts which was complained of, and we explained them all to the entire satisfaction of impartial men, and showed that there had been no oppression or injustice in any of them.”

In his diary Mr. Adams describes the affair thus : —

“In the evening we were invited to an interview, at Carpenter’s Hall, with the Quakers and Anabaptists. Mr. Backus is come here from Middleborough, with a design to apply to the Congress for a redress of grievances of the anti-pedobaptists in our province. The cases from Chelmsford, the case of Mr. White of Haverhill, the case of Ashfield and Warwick, were mentioned by Mr. Backus. Old Israel Pemberton was quite rude, and his rudeness was resented ; but the conference, which held till eleven o’clock, I hope will produce good.”

The motives of the Baptists in these efforts with the Continental Congress were grossly misrepresented by their opponents. Prominent leaders in the state churches publicly accused them of aiming to defeat a union of the colonies for resisting the oppressions of England, and thus playing the Tory under false colors. In view of these accusations, Mr. Backus, prompted by President Manning and others, addressed the Massachusetts Congress, reciting the grounds of the action of the Baptists, and affirming as follows : —

“At a time when all Americans are alarmed at the open and violent attempts that have been made against their liberty, it affords great cause of joy and thankfulness to see the colonies so happily united to defend their rights, and particularly that their late Continental Congress has been directed into measures so wise and salutary for obtaining relief and securing our future liberties, and that they have wisely extended their regards to the rights and freedom of the poor Africans. Since, then, the law of equity has prevailed so far, we hope it will move this honorable Assembly to pay a just regard to their English neighbors and friends at home.

“It seems that the two main rights which all in America are contending for are, not to be taxed where they are not repre-

sented, and to have their causes tried by unbiased judges. And the Baptist churches in this province as heartily unite with their countrymen in this cause as any denomination in the land, and are as ready to exert all their abilities to defend it. Yet only because they have thought it to be their duty to claim an equal title to these rights with their neighbors, they have repeatedly been accused of evil attempts against the general welfare of the colony. Therefore we have thought it expedient to lay a brief statement of the case before this Assembly.

"And when our churches understood that the Congress at Philadelphia was designed not only to seek present relief but also to lay a foundation for the future welfare of the country, they desired me to repair to that city, and with the best advice I could obtain, to try if something could not be done to obtain and secure full religious liberty to our denomination with others. I proceeded accordingly, and with a number of gentlemen and friends had a conference with the honored delegates of this province upon this subject. But one of them repeatedly declared that he believed this attempt proceeded from the enemies of America, — the injustice of which reflection let facts declare."

This vindication is closed by the manly expression of the determination to abide the consequences of neither paying the religious taxes, nor seeking exemption through the unjust and ineffectual requirements of the relief acts: —

"Not only upon your principle of not being taxed where we are not represented, but also because we dare not render that homage to any earthly power which we are fully convinced belongs only to God, we cannot give the certificates you require without implicitly allowing to men that authority which we believe in our conscience belongs only to God. Here, therefore, we claim charter rights, liberty of conscience. And if any still deny it to us, they must answer it to him who has

said, 'With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.'"

The action at Philadelphia was also justified as both patriotic and pertinent by the resolution of a civil assembly of Suffolk county, the county of Boston, which reads: "This county, confiding in the wisdom and integrity of the Continental Congress, now sitting at Philadelphia, will pay all due respect and submission to such measures as may be recommended by them to the colonies for the restoration and establishment of our just rights, civil and religious." And to this resolution the Philadelphia Congress gave express approbation.

It does not appear that these efforts in connection with that meeting of Congress secured, or directly sought, any formal action of the body. The committee of the Pennsylvania Association, after the conference, expressed their dissatisfaction with the action of the Massachusetts members of the Congress, and resolved "to pursue every prudent measure to obtain a full and complete redress for our brethren in New England." And they presented to every delegate of the Congress a copy of their resolution, with the Memorial read to the conference by President Manning, and the appeal to the public by Mr. Backus. A month or two afterward the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, in response to an address by the Baptist committee of grievances, passed the following respectful resolution, John Adams himself saying that he was apprehensive it

might cause a division among the provinces if they did not do something about it :—

“*Resolved*, That the establishment of civil and religious liberty to each denomination in the province is the sincere wish of this Congress. But being by no means vested with powers of civil government whereby they can redress the grievances of any person whatever, they therefore recommend to the Baptist churches that when a General Assembly shall be convened in this colony, they lay the real grievances of said churches before the same, when and where this petition will most certainly meet with all that attention due to the Memorial of a denomination of Christians so well disposed to the public weal of their country.

“By order of the Congress.

“JOHN HANCOCK, *President*.

“BENJAMIN LINCOLN, *Secretary*.”

And yet when this recommendation was acted upon by the Baptists of Massachusetts as often as the General Court met, it was threescore years before that body gave them the just and promised due.

The men who led in state affairs in Virginia came earlier to use their influence for equal freedom in religion. James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, and General Washington gave their advocacy to the Memorial of the Baptists, Mr. Madison even preparing that to the legislature for them, and Mr. Jefferson drawing up the “Act for Establishing Religious Freedom,” which was passed Dec. 17, 1785 ; by which, says Bishop Meade of the Episcopal Church of Virginia, “the warfare, begun by the

Baptists seven and twenty years before, was now finished. The church was in ruins, and the triumph of her enemies was complete." "The Baptists were the principal promoters of this work, and in truth aided more than any other denomination in its accomplishment."

CHAPTER XII.

CONSTITUTIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM THROUGHOUT AMERICA : THE NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT.

“Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.”

AS the organic laws of the national government came to be fixed, the principle of religious liberty claimed in them its place. First, in the Declaration of Independence, by which the colonies were transformed into free and independent states, this Magna Charta of American citizenship proclaims the rights for which the ages had contended, “that all men are created equal ; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights ; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness ; that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, and the people are to institute such forms of government as to them seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.” Under these principles ; all citizens must have equal liberty of religious opinion and action, as the prime condition of pursuing their happiness, and rendering consent to the government exercised over them.

How had these principles so gained currency as to become the unanimous avowal of the distinguished

representatives of all the colonies, and command the enthusiastic acceptance of the people of the land? No reader of history has ever questioned that the century and a half of agitation and light-spreading in this country and Europe, in which Baptists were the irrepressible leaders, had greatly to do with the evolution of the principles of freedom. In fact, it appears unquestionable that not only a general influence from this source, but a specific and immediate one, acted in the production of the Declaration of Independence.

The great document was written by Thomas Jefferson, and the spirit of the Virginia patriots had been schooled up to its grade. To various writers we are indebted for the fact that "near Monticello was a Baptist church, which Mr. Jefferson sometimes attended. Rev. Andrew Tribble was pastor. On one occasion Mr. Jefferson stated to Mr. Tribble, referring to the polity of Baptist churches, 'that he considered it the only form of pure democracy that then existed in the world, and he had concluded that it would be the best plan of government for the American colonies.'" This was several years before the Declaration was written. Mr. Tribble narrated this to Rev. Dr. Fishback, by whom a record was made of it. Mrs. President Madison also testified that it was a Baptist church from which these views of Mr. Jefferson were gathered. Other members in that Congress from Virginia, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere had been brought into sym-

pathy with those who were suffering for conscience' sake, and acknowledged the justice of their cause.

And notwithstanding the slow progress which freedom of opinion and equality of rights were to make throughout the land,—notwithstanding slavery, North as well as South, was to cling long to the body politic, and church establishments were still to distrain and distress,—it was yet a step forward on to high vantage-ground, when equal liberty was embodied in the creative act of the nation-makers, and was ever and everywhere to look down from this banner set up in the name of the Lord.

The next important gain in constitutional religious freedom was in the forming, by Congress, in 1787, of the ordinance for the government of the Territories, and the drawing up of the Constitution of the United States by the National Convention at the same time.

In the Congress of 1784, Mr. Jefferson, as chairman of the committee to report a plan of government for the Northwest Territory, true to his principles which he had embodied in the Declaration, reported, as an article, “that there shall be neither slavery, nor involuntary servitude in any of the States [that should be created], otherwise than in punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted.” To bind citizens by law to involuntary servitude of a church which in conscience they hold to be antichristian, and to punish them as criminals for not paying the service, vio-

lates this article to the worst extreme. The members of the Congress, by a strong majority, adopted the article ; but its adoption by the delegations of the States being also required, and one anti-slavery State not being represented, a majority of States was not secured. But in the Congress of 1787, this article was incorporated, verbatim, and made perpetual, as was also that exalted decree : "General morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and means of education shall be forever encouraged."

In the framing of the Constitution, where Washington was president of the convention, and Madison, Franklin, Hamilton, and other heads of the nation were members, the most earnest and critical discussions were upon slavery, as destructive of both religious and civil rights. Jefferson was an ambassador in Europe, but his principle of equality of rights in all men, which had been indorsed in Congress, was advocated by Mr. Madison and the majority of members, for incorporation in the Constitution. But it was known that some of the States would not ratify a constitution thus pronounced in the matter, and so the Constitution limited itself to affirming its purpose "to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity."

Immediately after the Constitution was published and submitted to the States for ratification, Baptists gave their attention to it, with the inquiry whether it

would sufficiently guarantee religious freedom. In Virginia their general committee was called together, and took up the question "whether the new Federal Constitution, which had lately made its appearance in public, made sufficient provision for the secure enjoyment of religious liberty;" and it was agreed unanimously that it did not. So upon consultation on the subject with Mr. Madison, the committee determined to address General Washington. An address was accordingly prepared and presented in 1789, after Washington's election as the first president. In the address it was said:—

"When the Constitution first made its appearance in Virginia, we, as a society, had unusual struggles of mind, fearing that the liberty of conscience, dearer to us than property or life, was not sufficiently secured. Perhaps our jealousies were heightened on account of the usage we received in Virginia, under the regal government, when mobs, bonds, fines, and prisons were our frequent repast."

President Washington kindly returned his personal answer, promising to use his influence in rendering the Constitution satisfactory. He said:—

"If I could have entertained the slightest apprehension that the Constitution framed in the convention where I had the honor to preside, might possibly endanger the religious rights of any ecclesiastical society, I would never have placed my signature to it. While I recollect with satisfaction that the religious society of which you are members, have been, throughout America, uniformly and almost unanimously the firm friends of civil liberty, and the persevering promoters of our glorious Revolution, I cannot hesitate to believe that they will be the faith-

ful supporters of a free yet efficient general government. Under this pleasing expectation, I rejoice to assure them that they may rely on my best wishes and endeavors to advance their prosperity."

Mr. Backus also wrote to General Washington at this time, sending him his "History of New England, with Special Reference to the Baptists," and referring to the continued oppressions under Massachusetts laws. His letter closed with the prayer "that your Excellency may still be guided and preserved in your exalted and difficult station until righteous government shall be well established in this land, that your latter days may be peaceful and happy, and your end be eternal life."

It has been stated that Washington, in his first message to Congress, recommended essentially what is the first Amendment to the Constitution. Madison had previously, at the request of the Baptists of Virginia, prepared the Memorial to the State Legislature which secured the "Act for Establishing Religious Freedom," which ended all state-church oppressions in that State. Jefferson was Washington's secretary of state. Under the powerful influence of these and other leaders, early in the session of the first Congress, and as the first of all amendments to the Constitution, it was enacted: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably

to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

Although this did not abolish in the separate States their established churches, as some States still retained them, the policy was yet condemned as anti-national, and powerful aid was contributed to the local efforts which soon removed the oppressive distinction throughout the country. Thus, at last, constitutional religious freedom was completely won in America.

In Canada and in Mexico, disestablishment had to follow. Although hierarchical persecutions have been and are often attempted by Romanists, and the civil authorities sometimes connive at them, the genius of government is yet one and the same over North America.

Dr. H. C. Fish—"Price of Soul Liberty"—quotes from the German philosopher, Gervinus, in his introduction to the "History of the Nineteenth Century," as follows:—

"In accordance with these principles, Roger Williams insisted, in Massachusetts, upon allowing entire freedom of conscience, and upon the entire separation of the Church and the State; but he was obliged to flee, and in 1636 he formed, in Rhode Island, a small and new society, in which perfect freedom in matters of faith was allowed, and in which the majority ruled in all civil affairs. Here, in a little state, the fundamental principles of political and ecclesiastical liberty practically prevailed, before they were even taught in any of the schools of philosophy in Europe. At that time people predicted only a short existence for these democratical experi-

ments—universal suffrage, universal eligibility to office, the annual change of rulers, perfect religious freedom—the Miltonian doctrines of schisms. But not only have these ideas and these forms of government maintained themselves here, but precisely from this little state have they extended themselves throughout the United States. They have conquered the aristocratic tendencies in Carolina and New York, the High Church in Virginia, the theocracy in Massachusetts, and the monarchy in all America. They have given laws to a continent, and formidable through their moral influence, they lie at the bottom of all the democratic movements which are now shaking the nations of Europe.”

To this, Dr. C. C. Bitting justly adds :—

“ Here and now, except Romanists, all Christians and the unconnected masses defend the doctrines of religious liberty. Just here it is that, on review, Baptists claim their noblest moral victory in the contest. Not only in codes, but in hearts, have they lodged those sublime principles for which their blood was profusely shed in the past, for which they once and long stood up alone, and by which every man of any faith may find immunity from the fierceness and relentlessness of religious hate, persecution, and vengeance. Baptists do not cite the facts in mere love of boasting, or with any wish to wound, but simply to defend their history, to repel the misstatements of malice or ignorance, to remind themselves and their children of the cost of our heritage of freedom, and to warn them to preserve it from the bigotry which would proscribe any man's religious privileges. Let them beware of the germs of evil in the pleas of non-essentials, unforbidden things, innocent forms, inferences, church regulations, etc.

“ *Obsta principiis*—resist beginnings! And remembering the glorious truth, as ordered of the providence of God, and expressed by Tertullian, *Sanguis martyrum, semen Christianorum*—the blood of the martyrs is the seed of Christians—sow the sacrifices, that they may reap the advances. Pliancy, where

principles are compromised, is sin ; and the most intolerant of dispositions is that which hates merely because of differences.

“ ‘With a great sum’ did Baptists buy that liberty wherein we were ‘born free.’ Let no Baptist stain or disgrace it with either infidelity or intolerance.”

CHAPTER XIII.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN HIGHER EDUCATION.

THE history of modern institutions of learning opens with the establishment of universities and parochial schools. Down to the middle of the last century these were founded and controlled by state and church authority ; and it followed that those who dissented from the established churches, and thus subjected themselves to legal disabilities, were either excluded from the schools or at disadvantage in them. Nor is this condition even yet entirely changed in some of the old countries.

Harvard, the first college started in this country, was established by state action when the Puritans were the state church. Its first president was of that order, but after years of preëminent usefulness in his office, he was promptly removed because he had embraced Baptist sentiments. This would have been just if the college had been founded and secured under their control by a denomination, as such. But as a state institution, for which all were alike taxed, the complaint and removal were persecution. And how inexorable was its spirit is shown by the high standing and efficient service with which the president was credited !

Mr. Dunster graduated at Cambridge, England, having as fellow-students John Milton, Jeremy Taylor, Ralph Cudworth, and John Harvard whose gift gave name and commencement of instruction to the American College. The new president had just arrived in this country when, by the death and bequest of his friend, Harvard, the projected institution was enabled to start.

A writer of his times says of President Dunster : "He was fitted from the Lord for the work, and by those that have skill in that way, reported to be an able proficient, both in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin languages,—an orthodox teacher of the truths of Christ, and very powerful through his blessing to move the affections." Another says he was "one of the greatest masters of the oriental languages that hath been known in these ends of the earth."

A more adequate tribute is that of Quincy, the historian of Harvard College :—

"Among the early friends of the college, none deserves more distinct notice than Henry Dunster. He united in himself the character of both patron and president, for, poor as he was, he contributed at a time of its utmost need one hundred acres of land toward its support, besides rendering to it for a succession of years a series of official services well directed, unwearied, and altogether inestimable. Under his administration, the first code of laws was formed ; rules of admission and the principles on which degrees should be granted were established ; and they were such as governed during the century. The charter of 1642 was probably, and that of 1650 was avowedly, obtained on his petition. By solicitations among his friends, and by personal sacrifices, he built the president's house. He was in-

stant in season and out of season with the General Court for the relief of the college in its extreme wants.

"Dunster's usefulness, however, was deemed to be at an end, and his services no longer desirable, in consequence of his falling, in 1653, as Cotton Mather expresses it, into the briars of anti-pedobaptism, and his having borne public testimony in the church at Cambridge against the administration of baptism to any infant whatever. Indicted by the grand jury for disturbing the ordinance of infant baptism in the Cambridge church, sentenced to a public admonition on lecture day, and laid under bonds for good behavior, Dunster's martyrdom was consummated by his being compelled, in October, 1654, to resign his office of president.

"He found the seminary a school ; it rose under his auspices to the dignity of a college. No man ever questioned his talents, learning, exemplary fidelity, and usefulness."

Thus wrote an ex-president of Harvard, whose denominational sympathies were averse from Dunster's.

When an infant came to his own home, he was indicted again by the grand jury, and tried in the county court, "for not bringing his child to the holy ordinance of baptism." And again he was convicted, solemnly admonished, and placed under bonds.

Eleven days after his forced resignation, he sent to the General Court a petition, wherein, with nothing of recantation, he asked, "in consideration of his circumstances, an allowance in salary which a committee had recommended, to be permitted to remain in the president's house during the settlement of his accounts with the corporation, and to be allowed to continue in the colony, in the work of teaching or preaching, or in any other laudable or liberal calling,

as God shall chalk out his way." This appeal, says Quincy, "was treated in a heartless way, and the reply to the last request was equivalent to warning him out of the colony."

He therefore moved to the more just Plymouth colony, where he labored in the ministry, until, in the midst of his years, death brought him the fruition of the trust in which he had said: "I know for what and for whom by grace I suffer." His unquenched love of Harvard inspired him in his last will and testament, and secured his burial among its honored graves.

Sympathy with him in his ill-treatment had been awakened in England, and means were offered for his return and support there,—Henry Cromwell, son of Oliver, and lord deputy of Ireland, advancing money for the return. But he chose to remain in New England.

It had not been in vain that Obadiah Holmes chose the prison and the scourge as his penalty, instead of voluntarily paying his fine, for exercising his rights of worship; for it was the cruel tyranny that tortured him and others which led the noble president of the college to abjure and denounce such oppression, and to investigate and adopt the tenets of the sufferer. And so had his successor in the presidency, Chauncey, been brought to study the persecuted sect, and accept immersion as the only baptism, causing him to be admonished on his election to the presidency that "it was expected and

desired that he forbear to disseminate or publish any tenets concerning the necessity of immersion in baptism."

Baptists were the first to put forth efforts for freeing the parent college of the religious tests; and their efforts were costly and long-continued. Of their denomination were the Hollis families, which through five or six generations, and during a hundred years, made themselves the most liberal contributors in the endowment and furnishing of the college; and their gifts, while inspired by the motive of aiding to supply trained Christian laborers of every name, were accompanied by the express desire that Baptists should have equal privileges with others. In one of the first letters of Thomas Hollis, the head of this noble line of benefactors, is the following: "You may be informed by Mr. Callender of my foundation in Harvard College, and the provision I have made for Baptist youth to be educated for the ministry, and equally regarded with pedobaptists."

It was through the young pastor of the Baptist church in Boston, Elisha Callender, a graduate of Harvard, that Mr. Hollis became enlisted in these endowments of the college; and the more so because he learned of the fraternal sentiments expressed by the Mathers in joining in the ordination of Mr. Callender. He therefore ventured, in connection with his large donations, to suggest the appointment of the Baptist pastor as one of the board of overseers of the college. The board, being controlled by the

ministers of the standing order, promptly rejected his proposal, though by the charter, Backus claims, he was as eligible as any one. Still the benefactions of the Hollises were maintained.

A professor, in one of the chairs endowed by Thomas Hollis, says of him: "By his frequent and ample benefactions for the encouragement of theological as well as human knowledge among us who are Christians of a different denomination than himself, he hath set such an example of generous, catholic, and Christian spirit, as has never before fallen within my observation, nor, as far as I now remember, within my reading." And in his funeral sermon, Dr. Colman said: "His heart and hand were the same to us as if we had been one in opinion and practice with him. And in this, let him stand a teaching pattern and example to us of a noble, Christian, apostolic spirit of love,—a shining testimony against a narrow party spirit."

Yet, except as individual students have enjoyed helps from the scholarships established, the Baptists have received little advantage from these generous provisions made by their brethren of these worthy families.

One hundred years after Harvard, thus generously contributed to and served by Baptists, removed President Dunster for adopting their belief, Yale College expelled students for electing to worship with the people called Separatists. And as impartial freedom and Christian consecration could not

be hoped for in existing institutions, the intelligent leaders in the Baptist denomination addressed themselves to the founding of such a school.

The Philadelphia Association, in correspondence with the English Baptists, and with the Charleston Association of South Carolina, the next oldest one in the country, led in the planning of a denominational school. The Hollises of England were among the first contributors. Instruction was commenced at Hopewell, New Jersey, by Rev. Isaac Eaton, the capable and consecrated pioneer in this work. The Holy Spirit was found a dweller in the school.

Among the first students and first converts was James Manning, who soon proved to be the master-builder of Rhode Island College. Hezekiah Smith was a fellow-student,—the renowned chaplain and friend of Washington in the Revolution, and the Baptist minister at Haverhill for fifty years. Other great men and great results came from that little mother school.

Soon the Baptist fathers decided to establish a college, and Rhode Island, their free asylum, was chosen as its seat. Young Manning, but twenty-five years of age, having graduated at the college of New Jersey, had committed to him the work of rearing the institution, with Morgan Edwards, a pastor of Philadelphia, as his financial co-worker. He commenced the school in 1765, at Warren, Rhode Island, being also chosen pastor of the Baptist church. It was in conception and character a sacred school

specially for the raising up of a godly and educated ministry. In contrast with the form-doing of the age, salvation through a regenerate experience was what young Manning prayed for and taught and preached. Never in his counseling of his students, especially in his addressing them at their graduation, did he fail to warn them against entering the ministry without genuine piety of heart and life.

The first, and for a time the only, student, William Rogers, converted about the time of his graduation, became the eminent pastor of the First Church in Philadelphia, a distinguished chaplain throughout the Revolution, and afterward professor in the University of Pennsylvania.

After five years, the college was removed to Providence, and later had its name changed to Brown University. Its charter, as proposed by its Baptist founders, was the first one in history to give impartial freedom in privileges and honors to all persons. While, as founded and supported by Baptists, it was required that the president and a majority of the trustees should be of that denomination, it was also required that all of the other denominations then existing in the state should be represented in the college government. The care with which these provisions were secured is shown in the declaration: —

“Into this liberal and catholic institution shall never be admitted any religious tests. But, on the contrary, all the members hereof shall forever enjoy free, absolute, and uninterrupted

liberty of conscience ; and the places of professors, tutors, and all other officers, the president alone excepted, shall be free and open for all denominations of Protestants, and the youth of all religious denominations shall and may be admitted to the equal advantages, emoluments, and honors of the college or university ; and the public teaching shall in general respect the sciences, and the sectarian differences shall not make any part of the public and classical instruction."

Thus in college and university law, religious freedom was instated, not as now by state authority, but by the voluntary and unprecedented action of benevolent founders ; and under that law religion did not suffer disorder and decline, as the dominant sentiment of the day would have predicted, but the college showed itself a husbandry of the Lord, most fruitful in the conversion of students, and in their consecration to godly service in all denominations of Christians. From the first, most gracious revivals were enjoyed in the institution.

One of these in the college and in the city of Providence, under the labors of President Manning, who was also pastor of the Baptist church, is thus described by him : —

"Frequently when I went to the recitation room, I would find nearly all the students assembled, and joining in prayer and praise to God. Instead of my lecture in logic and philosophy, they would request me to speak to them of the things concerning the kingdom of God. Mountains seemed to melt at the presence of the Lord, and the pride and haughtiness of men were laid low. In the space of about six months, I baptized more than one hundred persons. Many were also added to other churches of the town ; and this was at the time of the

fearful excitement of the outbreking of war. At the church it was frequently an hour before I could get from the pulpit to the door, on account of the numbers thronging to have an opportunity of stating the condition of their minds. There I would stand, pointing to the all-sufficient Saviour, and saying: 'Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.'"

President Manning had the joy of baptizing his graduate and colleague as teacher, who at the president's early death became his successor,—Dr. Jonathan Maxey, the brilliant scholar and eloquent preacher, of whom the graceful pen of Professor Elton wrote: "So long as genius, hallowed and sublimed by piety, shall command veneration, he will be remembered in his country as a star of the first magnitude."

The next president, Dr. Asa Messer, was also converted as he was leaving the college, and baptized by Dr. Maxey. His useful service of thirty-nine years as professor and president followed. And under President Wayland, the gracious revival spirit showed its presence in the college, as if "the pillar of cloud stood over the door" of this hallowed school of the prophets.

Well does Backus exclaim, in view of this history of Brown University: "How false, then, are the pretenses of many, that religion and learning would fail from among us, if they were not upheld by the power of the magistrates!" More than one fourth of all the graduates of this university up to 1866—its first hundred years—became ministers of the

gospel, large numbers of these and others being converted during their college course. Of foreign missionaries, commencing with Judson, a most influential body have gone from these hallowed halls, while Christian teachers and leaders in the civil and business world have been and are a most distinguished force.

Happily this example, which is illustrious because it was the first one in higher institutions of learning, has been copied more and more widely, until in our country the antitypes of it prevail as far as do the principles of Protestantism and civil liberty ; just as from the same Rhode Island spot the first example of religious freedom in civil government was the creation of "the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself after its kind ; and God saw that it was good," and its disseminating pervaded the land. May both creations scatter their seeds and reproduce themselves upon all lands ; and for the blessing, "Honor to whom honor is due."

PART II.

**BAPTIST MISSIONS AND RELIGIOUS
LIBERTY.**

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FORERUNNER IN THE MODERN MISSIONARY ERA.

IT is the missionary spirit in Christians that demands religious liberty. If the disciple of Christ could be silent and inert in his religion, he would have little use for freedom of speech and action. Occasionally he might be commanded to do things in violation of a good conscience toward God and man, but ordinarily he would be unmolested. It is because personal salvation is a well of water in the soul, springing up and overflowing, that it must be left free to flow. It is because Christ is revealed in his regenerate servants to be preached among the Gentiles, and he commands them to go and make disciples of all nations, and baptize them, and teach them, that no fence must cross any out-going road. When, therefore, the messengers come upon a human obstruction bristling with threats, their answer is: "We must obey God rather than men." "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." And pealing again, from God's angel comes the voice of command: "Go ye and stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." Hence the message-bearing spirit, the missionary spirit, is the force that has broken the

way through the tyrannical obstructions of freedom. To illustrate this from modern missionary history more specifically is the design of our concluding work ; and we turn back to look at —

ROGER WILLIAMS AS A FOREIGN MISSIONARY.

This characterization may seem forced, because the facts which justify it have been less dwelt upon than has his great distinction in the civil realm. What are the facts ?

Professor Fisher ("History of the Christian Church") remarks : —

"The Protestant churches were not at the outset moved by a desire to carry the gospel to the nations which lay beyond the confines of Christendom. Many years passed before the missionary spirit, now so characteristic of all evangelical communities, began to make itself felt. In 1644 the General Court of Massachusetts ordered that the county courts should see to it that the Indians residing within their respective shires should be instructed in the knowledge and worship of God. To further these and similar efforts, the Long Parliament, five years later, created a corporation called 'The President and Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England.' This, the first Protestant missionary society, contributed to the support of John Eliot and others who labored among the Indians dwelling in the neighborhood of the Puritan colonies."

"The religious life," he adds, "of Protestant Christians must first be quickened. Instead of a dead orthodoxy there must be a living Christianity. The work of Spener and Francke, German Pietists, was influential in bringing about so needful a

change." And he traces to this the Danish, German, and Moravian missions.

But there was nothing of missions to heathen peoples in the work of these Pietists. It was a cult of home religious life, of more positive character than the nominal Christianity which prevailed around them. Hence their name was given them by the contemptuous spirit which they provoked in proud formalists. Francke established a charity for the orphaned or friendless children in his own community, but no pagan cry from across oceans was heard calling to come over and help.

The Swedish, Danish, and Moravian missions had a different origin. They were started, and given an uncertain continuance by the government or the king, in connection with foreign colonies, and employed at times as aids in collecting tributes; or, as in the case of the Moravians, the old evangelical spirit was in them, as the hunted Hussite and Waldensian refugees, and stood ready to enlist when Count Zinzendorf, returning from a kingly coronation, told the story of his meeting the African from the West Indies and the Greenlanders from the arctic regions.

It was a hundred years before this that Roger Williams went preaching in the wilderness to the pagans of America, showing himself to be, so far as we have discovered, the John the Baptist of the later missionary era, whose fruitage now blesses the nations.

For there is evidence that his mind was turned to this service before he left England, and that he applied himself to it immediately on arriving in America; for he says: "The Spirit of God had moved me with a desire to be a missionary to the Indians." And in his first preaching, while his choice gifts and spiritual unction endeared him to the congregations of his fellow colonists, his ruling passion was a Christ-like compassion for the pagan souls in the wilds around him. "My sole desire," he writes, "was to do the natives good. God was pleased to give me a painful, patient spirit, even while I lived at Plymouth and Salem, to lodge with them in their filthy, smoky holes, to gain their tongue." Mingling with them thus, he did gain their tongue, formed for them a written language, and wrote and published his Indian grammar, "A key to the Language of America," and gave to the Indians in their printed language, which he taught them to read, portions of the word of God. This was years before the General Court and Parliament provisions, or Eliot's holding with the Indians his first service — twenty years before Eliot gave to them his translation of the Bible.

When the decree of banishment was upon him, and he knew that the ship was in port to take him and his family to England, where, if he would, he might have lived in comfort and honor, it was this spirit, devoted to the evangelizing of the heathen, that led him to mortgage his little home, unloose himself from the clinging arms of wife and little ones,

and, houseless through the long winter, make the Indians his rough hosts ; until, on heathen soil, he could buy lands of the natives, and establish a home among them, not less for their good than for his own freedom and that of others "distressed for conscience' sake."

"Here," he says, "though I paid the Indians liberally as I could for the lands, it was not thousands nor tens of thousands of money that could have bought for the English entrance into this bay ; but I was the procurer of the purchase by that language acquaintance, and favor with the nations, which it had pleased God to give me."

Thus here, in the midst of the barbarians of aboriginal America, he was the pioneer missionary. From the first in all the colonies, as later until his death in his own colony, it was the habit of his life to preach to them and teach them, and in friendly counsels, and by every service, to make himself their Christian benefactor. With a noble magnanimity he influenced them to abandon their war against his Massachusetts persecutors, and taught them forgiveness. "Covenants of peaceful neighborhood with all the sachems and natives around" having been formally made, and Williams, with eleven others, having, through the believers' baptismal burial, entered into covenant as a Baptist church, of which he was appointed pastor, during the forty years of his subsequent life he devoted himself, so far as his multiplying civil duties al-

lowed, to evangelistic work. Though after a time he yielded to his doubts as to whether he had rightly inaugurated the observance of the ordinances, and ceased to continue his attendance upon them, he yet lived on in love with the church, and maintained that its principles were the scriptural ones. His preaching to the Indians in their tongue, and his personal friendship with them, were a mutual joy to the end of his life, in 1683 ; and probably he had no more sincere mourners than his life-long brethren of the bay and the forests.

A fine evolution it was in history that, when the material monument to Roger Williams was built, there was a sense in which it needed not the State or the nation to do it ; but the dead hand of his Indian friends did it, in requital for his ministries to them. This is the touching poetry of the story : Two and a half centuries had passed, and Providence and Rhode Island had not built their memorial of stone and bronze for their illustrious founder ; but a gift which the Indian chiefs, Canonieus and Miantonomoh, had made to Williams in his lifetime for his homestead, had now become princely in value. It was a hundred acres of beautiful land and lake, lying on the edge of the city. It had remained in possession and occupancy in the Williams family. Its aged owner, Miss Betsey Williams, of Roger Williams a granddaughter with a line of "greats" prefixed, was moved to give this to the city of Providence, on the condition that a humble monument

should be erected upon it, and that the whole should be forever kept as a public park. The city accepted the trust, and with grateful liberality made the monument and the park a noble memorial,—the statue of the immortal benefactor, in unsullied granite, standing aloft with the symbol of freedom in his hands, and the light of God on his brow. Thus Christian compassion for pagan souls was appreciated by its befriended children, who rose up to call it blessed, and do it undying honor.

When Roger Williams crossed the boundary of English settlements into the Narragansett wilds, there was not on this globe a foot of ground on which a freeman could stand. When he died, one of the original colonies shone brightly under the risen sun of liberty, civil and religious, and was reflecting its radiance, to illuminate the other colonies and the nation which they were to become. And a Baptist mission to the heathen was God's leading agency in bringing in the epoch!

CHAPTER XV.

THE STORY OF WILLIAM CAREY.

AT the time when this missionary entered Asia, one hundred years ago, there was on that thronged continent no spot where religious liberty could be enjoyed, nor had there ever been through the ages of its history. The idolatrous systems that had ever enslaved its various and swarming peoples, were cruelly despotic. The races and castes of mankind were loaded with numberless priests, like fungus growths, drawing a corrupted life from deformed and diseased society. Civil rule was allied with priestly rule, and was heartlessly arbitrary. Despotism and slavery expressed the sum of human experience.

Dr. Thomas, an English surgeon in the East India Company's service, and a Christian man, who afterward became a missionary, restored from sickness a native Hindu. Having spoken to him of Christ, the physician of the soul, and invited him to share his meal, the grateful convalescent sat down to eat, when he was set upon with murderous violence by his kindred. He had broken caste, and death was the penalty. Such was heathen law, and heathen oppression had numberless other forms.

Earlier missionaries in India, as Ziegenbalg, Swartz, and others, had secured partial toleration in connection with colonists from Denmark and Holland, but nowhere was there established freedom.

The English East India Company, whose sway was over many scores of millions, was dominated by greed for the wealth of the Indies, and its policy was shaped to guard, and even to patronize, the cruel practices of idolatry. It therefore concerned itself to persecute intruders upon these practices. It prohibited all white men from entering the country without its license; and, the better to command the tributes it was grasping from the people, it gave large contributions to support idolatry, with its inhuman atrocities. By the act of England herself, through this arm of her government, five thousand rupees was at one time voted and paid to aid an idolatrous observance, with its burning of widows and drowning of children, and every other crime. Of course, should the Christian religion be admitted, it would spoil this business of bribing the poor devotees of idolatry. Some years after missionaries had been trying in vain in India to secure the toleration of the English government, a Scotchman of wealth and rank asked permission to take out, at his own expense, a body of Christian laborers, and see them supported there. He was refused, a director of the company saying, "I would rather see a band of devils in India than a band of missionaries."

WILLIAM CAREY.

Born in England in 1761, he was educated and trained a rigid churchman. By trade he became a repairer of boots and shoes, but made his shop his study. The geography of the earth and the condition of its peoples were portrayed on the wall of his shop, and photographed on his soul. At twenty-two, having experienced renewing grace, he was baptized by Dr. Ryland, and commenced lay preaching, walking a tour of twelve miles to perform each Sunday's service. Four years afterward he was ordained and settled as pastor, at seventy-five dollars a year, with a wife and two children to support. Upon him was laid, in a leading and inspiring measure, the "woe is me if I preach not the gospel" to the benighted nations for whom none seemed to be actively caring. He applied himself to the study of languages with a capacity unexampled and prophetic. "In seven years he learned Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, and Dutch, in acquiring which he had scarcely any assistance." He was also for a time the village schoolmaster. He shared, before his ordination, in instituting the monthly missionary concert of prayer for the conversion of the world. At all ministers' or associational meetings his theme was of missions to the heathen. A first paper on the subject was his published one: "An Inquiry into the Obligation of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen." The minds of other Baptist minis-

ters were becoming similarly exercised, and at the annual associational meeting, May, 1792, Mr. Carey preached his trumpet call, "Expect great things from God ; attempt great things for God ;" text, Isa. 54 : 2, 3. This inspired the resolution to organize a society, and October 2 of that year the English Baptist Missionary Society was formed, — the first organized body of the kind in modern times disconnected from governmental support.

The following year Mr. Carey and Dr. Thomas, the Christian surgeon who had been in professional service in India, were appointed as the pioneer missionaries, and took passage for that country ; but the East India Company learned of their sailing, and ordered the ship back to discharge them. After delays, it was only by the accommodation of a Danish vessel and Danish protection that they reached India, and began their work, being compelled to locate beyond the reach of governmental interference, and to bear the trials of the surrounding native barbarity long and bitterly. The missionaries were obliged to make themselves a necessity to their persecutors, healing their sick and helping their money-making. Carey became superintendent of the English company's indigo manufacture ; but all the while he was tasking to the utmost his marvelous power of acquiring languages, and dealing out the gospel in his speech, and soon in print, in the dialects of the pagans.

An English lord built a college in Calcutta to

teach arts and sciences, and he was obliged to appoint Carey as a professor, because no other man had enough knowledge of the people's language. Portions of the Bible were translated, and after seven years of personal toil as fishers of men, Krisna Pal, as the first captive to Christ, was drawn out of the great sea of heathenism. The Christian world heard the new song put into his mouth, as it made for itself the words : —

“ O thou, my soul, forget no more
The Friend who all thy sorrows bore.”

And they said : “ Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” The sentiment in England commanded the godless trading company and the servile pagan kings to “ touch not the Lord's anointed, and do his prophets no harm.” The missionaries and the supporters of the mission at home had set themselves, by prayer and labors, to secure the civil and religious liberty which belongs to man ; but it was twenty years before the English wholly ceased to embarrass the mission with forms of persecution, though Carey himself commanded, by his wonderful labors and learning, and his helpful service of the government, their respectful and remunerative treatment. At length his influence, with the powerful coöperation of Andrew Fuller in England, whose writings and personal labors, beyond those of any other man, are credited with the result, secured the amendments in the company's charter,

which gave essential freedom. The powerful Baptist preacher and writer, Robert Hall, shared in achieving this victory for religious liberty, but the efforts of all sprang alike from the missionary work in which they became engaged.

After nearly another score of years in his labors, Carey saw the terrible oppressions of the idolatrous priesthood and civil despotism restrained by law. Against all his efforts to have it arrested, the burning of widows on the funeral pile of their husbands had gone on until, under the eye of the English government, more than seventy thousand had thus been sacrificed ; when, of a Sunday morning, as he was preparing to preach, the government order prohibiting suttee came to his hand. He must translate it into Bengali ; for the government had made him their official translator. Sending another to the pulpit, he seized the document, and by evening it was ready to go out through the vast realm, as the extinguisher of those awful fires.

Thus, one by one, the strongholds of oppression fell before the peaceful but puissant assault of missions in Baptist hands.

The giving of the Bible, the Magna Charta of freedom, to the nations in their mother tongues, made these reforms both possible and permanent. Carey had been doing this with marvelous rapidity and correctness from his arrival in India until his death. In thirty years Carey, Marshman, Ward, and their associates had rendered the word of God

accessible to one third of the human race, whose dark places had so long been full of the habitations of cruelty; and there had actually been scattered, through forty dialects, nearly a quarter of a million copies of the word that bringeth light, four hundred thousand dollars of the cost of the mission work having been earned and given by these men themselves, who consecrated all that came to them in their offices and services under government to the work for which they went forth. The translations of the Bible, and the educational and religious books which Carey gave to these people, have been in use from that day to this by all denominations and by government. The Church of England, whose representatives at first hunted the missionaries off their territory, came at last in a better representative,—the good Bishop Wilson,—and kneeling by Carey's dying bed, asked of him a dying blessing.

William Wilberforce, the great emancipator from human bondage, was the fitted eulogist to say, in the House of Commons, "Carey had the genius, as well as the benevolence, to devise the plan of a society for communicating the blessings of Christian light to the natives of India," and the eulogy proceeded to describe the execution of the "truly noble enterprise."

MARSHMAN, FATHER AND SON.

These associates with Carey wrought on their personal lines of effort with coördinate and well-nigh

commensurate efficiency in the great emancipation of the Eastern nations. The son, John C. Marshman, rose to be a learned and statesman-like Christian evangelist. He established *The Friend of India*, the first paper published in the East and in the Bengalese language, and made it a powerful advocate of civil reforms. Forbidden to publish it within the company's jurisdiction, he sent it over the country from beyond their border, and its English edition produced great effects in the home country, as well as upon its readers in India. It freely criticised the wrongs in the government, and pleaded the cause of the dumb. Later in life he became "the trusted adviser of the government in important affairs," and few men exercised greater influence upon the rulers and the ruled. A layman, he yet was a most valued missionary laborer and generous contributor.

The father, Joshua Marshman, had been a teacher in England, and was of thorough education, especially in Semitic languages. Six years later than Carey he joined the Serampore mission, being driven, as the others were, for a shelter under the Danish flag. He soon commenced the study of the Chinese language, that he might give the word of God to another third of the human family; and after many years of laborious application, the first translation of the Christian Scriptures into the language of China was sent forth from his hand. His son had shared with him in the great labor. He also translated into English the works of Confucius.

The outgrowth of these labors affected greatly the breaking down of the Chinese wall, and the admission of a freer spirit into the hoary exclusivism of the nation. And to-day, over that great empire, its monarch charges its executives to see that all are protected in their religious rights.

These pioneer labors at last challenged the highest estimation of the civilized world. Philanthropy, science, and statesmanship paid tribute to the men who inaugurated and made permanent Christian missions to the heathen. The sneer of the cynic gave place to the reverent ascription of well-earned renown. And again it is Baptist missionaries that have broken the roads for liberty,—not for themselves alone, but for all men. No such changes in government and among a people had ever been wrought, or would ever have been wrought, by colonists seeking wealth or any worldly gain. They could better prosecute their objects by arbitrary power, and by leaving the people in ignorance and superstition. It is the missionary, Christ, who is sent in his servants, as in his person, to preach deliverance to the captives, to set at liberty them that are bruised, and bring the prisoners from the dungeon.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE STORY OF JUDSON.

ANOTHER large section of the Eastern world was opened to freedom by the Burman mission. When Mr. and Mrs. Judson were driven to Rangoon by the oppression of the East India Company, they found themselves under an unmitigated despotism. There was not a spot in that teeming kingdom of Burmah where slavery of body and soul did not hold sway. Persecution had followed the missionaries from port to port wherever they sought to land, bent upon forcing them back to America or England. Only the forecasting providence of God had availed to bring them to this shore, as the Spirit led Paul to cross the sea into Europe.

And now began the seeming unequal conflict between the solitary and humanly helpless invader and the raging heathen kings and rulers, who set themselves against the Lord and his anointed. Said Judson : —

“One malicious intimation to the king would occasion our banishment ; and banishment is no small thing, being attended with confiscation of all property, and such various abuses as would make us deem ourselves happy to escape with our lives. Such a situation may appear somewhat alarming to a person accustomed to the liberty of a free government ; but let us re-

member that it has been the lot of the greater part of mankind to live under a despotic government, devoid of all security for life or property for a single moment ; that the Son of God chose to become incarnate under the most unprincipled and cruel despot. And shall any disciple of Christ refuse to do a little service for his Saviour under a government where his Saviour would not refuse to live and die for his soul ? God forbid."

The annoyances of orders summoning him into the presence of officers to give account, and threats of banishment, were soon suffered. Taxes were arbitrarily imposed upon the missionary. He learned the pitiful fate of a priest who had forsaken Buddhism, and become a Catholic Christian, and who had been imprisoned and beaten until, at the point of death, a plea of insanity in his behalf gained for him an escape from the country.

Judson and Coleman, with their costly presents and petition for toleration, were spurned from the royal presence. Thirty dollars was extorted for a passport to return to Rangoon, after they had been commanded to leave the capital.

The first converts in the mission had much of persecution to face, and when the British government had changed its policy to toleration of missions, the Burman missionaries sought to remove their base of operations to a point within the company's territory. Judson, however, remained in Burmah.

And finally, in his sufferings from persecution, came that historic, unparalleled endurance of the twenty-one months' imprisonment and torture in Ava,

Amarapoora, and Ong-pen-la. What Mr. and Mrs. Judson and Dr. Price went through in that long period of horrors, words faintly depict. With the prospect of death constantly before them, by execution, by cruel tortures, by extreme sicknesses, without care or medicines, and often with no knowledge of each other's fate, every capacity of innocent suffering, in body, mind, and heart, was kept upon the rack. "Ministering angel" is the common conception of Mrs. Judson's part throughout the long agony; but ministering angels do not, we trust, have to bear in themselves what she bore.

Well has Dr. Wayland said of her:—

"Then were revealed those elements of character which designated Mrs. Judson as one of the most remarkable women of her age. She was the only European female in Ava, and the only foreigner who was not consigned to prison. Her whole time, with the exception of twenty days when she was confined by the birth of her child, was devoted to the alleviation of the sorrows of her husband and his fellow prisoners. Perfectly familiar with the Burman language, of a presence which commanded a respect even from savage barbarians, and encircled her with a moral atmosphere in which she walked unharmed in the midst of a hostile city, she was universally spoken of as the guardian angel of that band of sufferers. Sometimes she appealed to the officers of government, but more frequently to their wives, and pleaded for compassion with an eloquence which even they could not resist. Fertile in resources and wholly regardless of her own privations or exposures, she was incessantly occupied in alleviating the pain or ministering to the wants of those who had no other friend."

Thus for nearly two years —

"There was seen, in the midst of the horde of ruffians, a lady whose intelligence and refinement had quite lately won the admiration of the highest circles of the British metropolis, soothing the sorrows of the captive ; ministering to the wants of the sick, providing and preparing food for the starving ; consoling the dying with words of heavenly peace ; heedless of meridian suns and midnight dews, though surrounded by infection ; devoting herself with prodigal disinterestedness to the practice of heavenly charity, and sustaining the courage of men inured to danger and familiar with death, by the example of her own dauntless resolution."

In her own pitiful narration, describing her daily visits and lingerings at the gate through which her husband must see her, she says : —

"For days together I could not go until after dark, when I had two miles to walk in returning. O how many, many times have I returned from that dreary prison at nine o'clock at night, and thrown myself down, and endeavored to invent some new scheme for the release of the prisoners ! So engrossed was every thought with present scenes and sufferings, that I seldom reflected on a single occurrence of my former life, or recollected that I had a friend in existence outside of Ava."

Her sick and moaning babe was borne in her arms, and at times she herself was prostrated in sickness, but never remitted her care.

Dr. Judson, worn out and famished in torturing confinement, burning with fever and lost in deliriums, was driven and dragged from prison to prison, and confronted with orders for being put to death. The terrible last removal to the place of purposed execution, over the distance of eight miles, on foot, in the midst of his sickness, under the hottest sun, and on

burning sand that scalded the skin from his naked feet, was an extreme of brutality of which history has hardly a parallel.

But it was the Lord's way, marvelous in our eyes, of having his servant prepared and in readiness to aid the warring nations in the establishment of peace, and in bringing the mission field into the enjoyment of unhindered evangelization ; and more and more has the spirit of freedom gained ascendancy in all those realms that the missionaries found under every infliction of slavery. To-day the gospel has free course, and is glorified in Burmah, diffusing its blessings through all the races of its dwellers. A church of Baptist Christians overlooks the old prison-ground of Ong-pen-la, and the *Via Dolorosa* that was trodden by the bleeding feet. The missionary work, with its Bible in all the tongues, its church ministries, its schools and presses, has given character to the political changes that have come over those lands.

Says an English writer, speaking of Dr. Judson's labors for religious freedom : "He clung to the hope that through our influence and power Burmah would be opened, and that which induced him to accompany Mr. Crawford, the commissioner, and to afford him invaluable aid, was the hope of securing a treaty favorable to religious toleration," and he "devoted his great abilities and thorough acquaintance with Burmah, its princes, and its people, to aid in the conduct of the negotiations." Dr. Wayland eloquently concludes :—

"When the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ ; when every pagoda shall have been leveled, and every hilltop from the Bay of Bengal to the foot of the Himalayas shall be crowned with a temple to Jehovah ; when the landscape shall be thickly studded with schools, scattering broadcast the seeds of human knowledge ; when law shall have spread the shield of its protection over the most lowly and the most exalted ; when civil and religious liberty shall be the birthright of every Burman, then will the spot where stood the prison of Ong-pen-la be consecrated ground. Thither will pilgrims resort to do honor to the name of their benefactor ; and mothers, as they teach their children to pray to the eternal God, will remind them of the atheism of their forefathers, and repeat to them the story of the life and labors of Adoniram Judson. He asked that he might redeem a few immortal souls from eternal death, and it was granted him to lay the foundations of Christian civilization for an empire. Such honor doth God bestow upon holy, humble, self-denying, longsuffering love."

And over the rest of Asia the history is similar. The missions of other denominations have wrought, as have those under Baptist leadership, incorporating into the life of the people and the policies of governments the principles of the Christian religion. The Christian nations are brought into sympathy with the evangelization of the pagan world ; and in their national influence they demand the recognition of the human brotherhood as to civil and religious rights. England, the mistress of the seas of the East, and of great peoples of the earth, has asserted this demand, and compelled assent by her invincible power ; and so in Burmah, in Siam, in China, in Japan, in Turkey, and in Syria, slowly the peaceful

light of freedom of conscience and of all religious acts has rolled back the darkness and its cruelties. Up the mountains of higher Burmah the light-boundary has, by the power of England; moved on within the last few years. More recent is the imperial proclamation of China, commanding all executives of the civil law to secure to every person freedom in the peaceable exercise and diffusion of his religion.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE STORY OF THE HALDANES.

THE missionary century, of whose dawn we have written, came upon the British Islands and the continent of Europe when their forms of Christianity partook of the coercive type. State establishments claimed to be the exclusive church, and compelled all the people to share in supporting them. Their membership, based on infant baptism and child confirmation, was but another name for all "the children of this world"; and dissenters were burdened with many exactions and disabilities, or suppressed by violence or exile.

The originators and supporters of the English Baptist Missionary Society were among the first and the leading contestants for the abolishment of these oppressions. The Rylands and the Halls, Carey, Fuller, Marshman, Pearce, and others were a potency which could not be ineffectual. Under their influence others of later birth were raised up to increase the power which strove for spirituality in churches and freedom in religious action. Such were the two men whose names head this chapter, and of whom too little is generally known.

In the English navy, while its ships hung like birds of prey off the coast of our struggling colonies

in the war of the Revolution, were two orphaned brothers, young boys of noble birth and high promise,—James and Robert Haldane. They were the only survivors of a family of rank and wealth in Scotland. Their uncle, Lord Duncan, who was in high naval office, gave them favored positions in that service. In battles with French ships, Robert, the older, early attracted notice for his wise and heroic actions. Afterward James became a distinguished captain.

When Robert became of age and of good education, he chose to leave the sea, though he ardently loved the service, and high promotion was before him. The care of his estate claimed his attention, and he married a lady of great worth in character, who for fifty-seven years was to be a benison in his life and a partner in his Christian work. He lived as a gentleman of the world until the moral questions involved in the French Revolution blazed upon the notice of thoughtful men.

His thoughts, thus awakened, strangely turned into gracious convictions as to his spiritual state. The prayers of his godly mother, whom he vividly remembered though she had died in his young childhood, came up in remembrance before God; and especially the interested conversation of a pious and Bible-learned stone-mason, who was in his employ, led him in penitence to an intelligent and stable trust in Christ. His education had been good, his mind was of a commanding order, and habits of studiousness and lively discussion were his delight.

He was then in the national church of Scotland,—the Presbyterian.

In 1795 a friend of Robert Haldane sent him Dr. Carey's report of missionary work at Serampore, India. The newly converted soul of the gifted young man was kindled at once by it into a flame of missionary zeal. After prayerful deliberation by himself and his wife, he decided to consecrate himself and all that he possessed to the great dawning enterprise of foreign missions. The purpose settled into the plan of a personal mission in Bengal. His large property was to meet the expenses of outfit and support on the field, in the case of all engaged. He secured as associates his eminent friend whose ministry he had enjoyed,—Dr. Bogue, afterward the distinguished theological teacher and author,—with two other ministers, and others as teachers, and a printer and artisans. The London Missionary Society, to which he and his brother were original and large contributors, and influential public men, notably William Wilberforce, earnestly seconded the proposed mission. It involved, however, too much to be placed at stake unless the permission of the East India Company could be secured. Mr. Haldane, with great wisdom, employed every means of influencing a favorable answer to his application, spending a season at London in the efforts; but the inflexible opposition, strengthened by such high officials as Pitt and Canning, had nothing better to say than that "the court have weighty and substantial reasons

which induce them to decline a compliance with your request." It was then that in their discussions a member is reported to have said: "I would rather see a band of devils in India than a band of missionaries"—a confession honest and natural for those who are doing the devil's work. So would not have felt the nobler spirit of Burke, who on another occasion thus expressed his indignation: "If we were to be driven out of India this day, nothing would remain to tell that it had been possessed during the inglorious period of our dominion by anything better than the orang-utan or the tiger. Every other conqueror of every other description has left some monument either of state or beneficence behind him. England has erected no churches, no hospitals, no palaces, no schools; made no high-roads, cut no navigations, dug out no reservoirs."

Thus defeated in his great scheme, Mr. Haldane had to look elsewhere for an opening that his missionary spirit could enter; for he did not abandon his purpose. His settled conviction was: "I was spending my time in the country to little profit, whilst, from the command of property which through the goodness of God I possessed, I might be somewhere extensively useful." In this conviction he proceeded to sell his beautiful estate which his taste had so adorned, and look for ways in which he could promote the Christianity which he said "is either everything or nothing," and which he had come to know to be everything.

He had not far to seek. Scotland itself was missionary ground. Though all the people were church-members, they were dead in sin. "It was the midnight of the church in Scotland," says one. The infidelity of Hume and others infected the universities and poisoned the ministry. Many of the latter were avowed Unitarians, in sympathy with the New England defection into those views. Ignorance of the Bible and scoffs at experimental religion characterized the people. Still the Good Shepherd was keeping his own on these northern hills. Faithful servants had he in such godly pastors and teachers as John Campbell, David Bogue, John Aikman, and those apostolic preachers who came on divine errands from England, — John Newton, Abraham Booth, Andrew Fuller, and Rowland Hill, and whose visits awakened wide-spread evangelical interest. With the spiritual Christianity in which these men were leaders, Robert Haldane ardently allied himself.

His brother James, meanwhile, retired from his captaincy in the navy, and became, like Robert, experimentally a convert from a worldly to a Christly life. Their minds were now harmoniously turned to evangelical work in their own country. They became lay preachers, associating with others similarly called; and gathering the people in halls or open-air assemblies, they preached the gospel unto them with the power of "the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven." They built spacious free tabernacles

in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and elsewhere, and secured helpers to maintain constant services, all at their own expense. Extensive tours for preaching, tract distribution, and all personal labors were made through the country and on the islands. Independent churches were organized, congregational in government and of converted membership.

And now came the light from the word of God on the subject of baptism. They searched in vain for authority to baptize infants, and found that the baptism of believers is immersion. In loyal obedience, they were baptized; and James, receiving ordination, and serving nearly fifty years as pastor in his tabernacle in Edinburgh, had the Baptist usage on this ordinance, and yet they both earnestly endeavored to practice church-fellowship with all Christians. But they found that for this it is not enough for Baptists to receive all to the Lord's table, or partake at it in other churches. In spite of their doing this, their position on baptism made their loved brethren withdraw into pedobaptist organizations.

The formal clergy of the established church instigated persecutions against their lay preaching. James Haldane and his associate preacher were arrested, and conducted to a distant town before the sheriff; but his insistence upon his rights foiled the attempt to suppress him, and crowds received him joyfully on his return, and listened to his preaching with rapt attention. The good Dr. Erskine, of the state church,

came out strongly for tolerating the lay preachers, but thought they ought not to take a text. The social and spiritual power of the evangelists, and the gracious results of their work, drew the people to demand for them religious freedom, and so the cause of liberty again was advanced by the missionary spirit.

The Haldanes also sustained Christian and theological schools, where at their expense several hundreds of ministers were educated, and sent thence over the world, during the long service of these generous benefactors. Thirty boys at one time were imported from Africa, sent by their parents or friendly guardians on request of Robert Haldane, and placed in school in England at his expense. He also prepared and published a work on the "Evidences of Christianity," as seen from the spiritual point of view, which was highly commended.

His interest in missions in India was not suffered to die, though the way thither had been shut against him. By bringing the well-known Andrew Fuller to Scotland, he gave an impulse to the Serampore translations of the Scriptures, which were then languishing for want of funds, and were scoffed at as "the abortive efforts of a nest of consecrated cobblers." His invitation to Fuller contained the gift of five hundred dollars, with the promise that his brother would be equally interested. "He had printed for distribution myriads of religious tracts, and circulated Bibles, when as yet there was no London Tract Soci-

ety or British and Foreign Bible Society; and he had formed, or assisted in forming, many Sunday-schools." In these various forms of evangelization he had in twenty years expended some three hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

MISSION OF ROBERT HALDANE ON THE CONTINENT.

The religious condition of the countries on the continent of Europe had deeply exercised the mind of this devoted exemplar of the missionary spirit, and at length the time came for him to attempt a long-cherished scheme of personal labor in those countries. In some of them religious toleration was granted, but in none was there full religious freedom. His plan was first to make trial of labor in France and Switzerland, whither himself and his wife now made their journey. His education, his early travels, and personal intimacies with men of culture, had made him familiar with these countries and their language. As an evangelist he was furnished with a well-studied knowledge of the word of God, and a prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit.

In Paris they found gross papal darkness and frigid atheism, alike so impervious as to resist every attempt to introduce the truths of the gospel. Providentially they met there Mr. Hillhouse, an American gentleman of New Haven, Conn., who in his travels had been searching to find whether regenerate piety was surviving anywhere in Europe. Through names

which he supplied they were furnished better means of introduction, and went on to Geneva.

Some years ago the writer heard it publicly stated by a Presbyterian clergyman, who had studied abroad in his young manhood, that when Robert Haldane entered Geneva, in 1816, there was not known to be a converted person at that historic center of nominal Christianity. The surprise awakened by the statement was increased by the investigation which verified its substantial truth ; so that Europe was almost unbroken missionary ground when the evangelists of this century began there their efforts, for if not in Switzerland, then not anywhere were regenerate Christians standing out in clear view. The established forms of Christianity had come to bear but their wild grapes. The Holy Spirit was not in them as the life-juice which produces the fruits of the Spirit. Indeed, professed Christians were ready, like those at Ephesus, to confess ignorance as to whether there is any Holy Spirit. State religions, with their graceless hierarchies and masked infidelity, overgrew and concealed true piety, which yet had its places of sustained life.

Under this spiritual death, the creed of Calvinism was but a skeleton, nor even that without the loss of its principal parts. Pastors and theological teachers, students, and people at large had gone over to formalism and rationalism. Arian, Unitarian, and rationalistic essays had usurped the place of preaching and teaching the Lord Jesus. Bible instruction

was unknown. Worldly life and dissipating pleasures overran the Sabbath, and vitiated common morality. It had even come to the pass that the fundamental doctrines in our religion were prohibited themes of discussion. Candidates for the ministry were required to sign a pledge not to agitate such subjects as the innate sinfulness of man, the Godhead of Jesus, the trinity, spiritual regeneration, and the election of grace.

Taking apartments at a hotel, the learned evangelist sought interviews with the preachers, teachers, students, and others, inviting them to his rooms for conversation and Bible-study. It was soon learned that he was discussing prohibited subjects, and the religious "liberalists" applied to the civil rulers to banish him from the city. He could not, however, be ejected from his own hired rooms.

For a time his efforts seemed hopeless. Thus discouraged, he planned to go on into southern France. The evening before he should leave had come, when unexpectedly a courteous but unsympathizing minister begged the privilege for the next morning of taking Mr. and Mrs. Haldane in his carriage to visit a work of art. At the appointed hour the carriage came, but with a student escort, bearing the regrets of the minister that ill-health forbade his coming in person. Mr. Haldane at once took his seat by the side of the student, and engaged him in such a conversation as that in which our Saviour engaged the woman of Samaria. The

Lord opened the heart of the young man, as the heart of Lydia was opened, to attend unto the things spoken.

Thus providentially the abandonment of a momentous personal mission was prevented. The young man, a student in theology, but ignorant of Christ, had convictions awakened which resulted in his conversion, and in his becoming a useful preacher. He urged Mr. Haldane to remain and teach him, and others whom he induced to join him, the way of the Lord more perfectly. Soon there was a class of students, with neighboring ministers dropping in, making the number of twenty-five coming regularly to the rooms of the gospel teacher. They requested him to commence anew a more systematic course of instruction; and, taking up the epistle to the Romans as the text-book of his course, he brought its great truths home to the understanding and the heart with the effectual power of the Holy Spirit. His rich commentary on Romans survives as a reminiscence of that year's work at Geneva.

An illustration of his dealing with the souls of these men is given in the grateful tribute paid to him by the author of the "History of the Reformation," Merle D'Aubigné, who was one of his student class, and was there brought to the experimental faith. He describes hearing Mr. Haldane read from his Bible a chapter from Romans concerning the natural corruption of man, a doctrine to which

D'Aubigné was blind. He was astonished and convinced as the passages were made to speak their solemn import. He exclaimed to the teacher: "Now I do indeed see this doctrine in the Bible!" "Yes," replied the good man, with his finger as though pressing a lancet; "but do you see it in your heart?" And D'Aubigné felt the godly sorrow unto life, and became an exemplar, and the great portrayer of the belief of the heart which is unto righteousness.

In the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance in London in 1851, a speaker was recommending the Foreign Aid Society on the ground that it employed French and Swiss preachers, and did not send out Englishmen, when Dr. Merle D'Aubigné rose and said: "I for one cannot accept this as a recommendation; for if it had not been for the grace of God in ordering the mission of the venerable Robert Haldane from Scotland, I myself, so far as man can see, would not have been here to-day."

Other names of men who by these godly labors in Geneva, and afterward in Montauban, were brought out as a cluster of bright stars to shine in the spiritual darkness of their countries, and forever and ever in glory, are Charles Rieu, Henry Pyt, and the doctors Monod, Malan, and many more; while scarcely less decisive was Haldane's influence upon Dr. Gaussen, Felix Neff, and others.

One of the class afterward wrote: "Almost all the students in theology attended these studies. Of

the whole of them there was but one who did not appear to have been touched, but some did not afterward show that they were savingly benefited. Still it is certain that the greater part of those who attended have become men eminent in the service of God." The personal mission of Haldane was a divine success. Dr. George B. Cheever, of New York, visiting Geneva and tracing the results of the work, wrote: "This was a most remarkable movement of divine providence,—one of the most remarkable to be found on record. Such an incursion of divine grace into the very citadel of error was anything but peaceable to its guardians; but the strong man armed must give up his house when a greater than he comes upon him." The revival extended into other parts of Switzerland and into portions of France.

But to the converted preachers and disciples the words of the apostle were to have address: "Unto you it is given in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." * Presbyterianism had made itself a leagued hierarchy in power, as well as a body of spiritual death and doctrinal corruption. These Christians were forbidden ordination, irrespective of the wishes of those to whom they would minister.

Dr. Malan was an eloquent young preacher in high office in the state church and university. A Socinian rationalist, his mind was first inclined toward evangelical truth by a visit of Dr. Mason, of New York; but he experienced the truth as it is in

Jesus under Mr. Haldane's labors. Then he entered his pulpit, and, before the officials of school and church and state, poured forth the gospel with all his eloquent power and with the demonstration of the Spirit. It was "like bolts of fire shot from heaven." His august hearers "almost gnashed on him with their teeth." He descended from the pulpit, and passed through their opening ranks unrecognized, an avoided and rejected man. His own relatives turned away from him with mingled emotions of disappointment, vexation, and shame. His attached wife (afterward partaker of the like precious faith), beheld him with a grieved and wounded heart, tenderly pleading, "How could you do it?" He walked in his robes from the ancient temple of Calvin to his own house, dejected and overwhelmed, about to hide himself in his secret chamber; but on entering his door the manly form and benignant countenance of Robert Haldane revived him like a cordial, and, grasping hands, the good evangelist exclaimed, "Thank God, the gospel has been once more preached in Geneva!" But God made the wrath of man to praise him. The persecutions served to make the revival more effectual by separating the regenerate life from the dead incumbrances, and giving it appropriate organic growth.

Mr. Haldane, though known as a Baptist, did not teach of the ordinances, or cause their observance, being a lay evangelist, and, as he said, like the apostle Paul, "sent not to baptize, but to preach the

gospel." Independent churches, however, were formed, and laborers were sustained, aided by their generous help from England; and an evangelical school of theology was established with Gaussen, D'Aubigné, and others as teachers, whence many useful laborers were supplied for the continuous harvest. D'Aubigné has said that "the narrative of the revival would form one of the most beautiful episodes in the history of the church."

But the mission of the godly man and his wife was not to be limited to Geneva; for in the forms of work that awaited them, the helpmeet is more to come into view. After less than a year in this capital, they changed their place of labor to Montauban, in the south of France, where more than two years were spent in teaching the Scriptures, and securing their translation into French, with that of his "Commentary," his "Evidences," and other Christian publications. In these labors Mrs. Haldane bore her helpful part.

The same opposition to evangelical truth, and the same restrictions on freedom of speech, were encountered there that had been in Paris and Geneva. The Protestant clergy applied to the civil authorities to expel the evangelist, but he was able to entrench himself against their power, and God gave him power to make inroads upon the rationalism that was giving to the people the stone and the serpent instead of the bread and the fish. The theological school was a seminary with no Christ in what it disseminated, but

its dean came soon to bewail with tears that "since the appearance at Montauban of that disastrous meteor, Mr. Haldane, all had been poisoned with his doctrine." "Many young students were brought to Christ, many ministers were delivered out of error, and the seed was sown of a future and abundant harvest." The Bible and religious books and tracts were put in general circulation through the munificence of Mr. Haldane, and faithful preachers went forth into the fields.

After three years of absence, the worthy couple returned to the enjoyment of their home in Scotland, but the work on the Continent was not displaced from their care. Mr. Haldane conceived and led in constituting the Continental Society, whose object was the sustaining of the evangelical laborers in the several countries, and through this agency he wrought on in the work which he had inaugurated; and to the end of his life he was cheered by the communications which recounted the continuous progress of what his personal labors had started.

For the furtherance of the work, both abroad and at home, he instituted and sustained in Scotland and England the theological instruction of classes of consecrated young men, numbers of whom became eminent ministers. Archibald Maclay, D. D., was educated by Robert Haldane, and selected as one of the missionaries in his projected mission in India. This mission being defeated, by his patron's advice Mr. Maclay came to America, preaching in New

York first to a Congregational church ; but embracing Baptist sentiments with his Scottish friends, he rose as such into his well-known prominence.

The missionary spirit in the Haldanes drew them into hearty and liberal coöperation in organizing and sustaining the British and Foreign Bible Society, of which a Baptist, Rev. Joseph Hughes, was the originator. In this society Christians of all denominations combined to give the word of God, without man's adding or taking away, to people of all tongues and lands ; but without the knowledge of its originators and principal officers, the indifferent and compromising spirit of nominal Christianity came to secure editions, through auxiliary societies, which incorporated the apocryphal books. Against this Robert Haldane became the champion of the unadulterated Bible. For twelve years the contest was waged. His writings were voluminous, and his influence a leading one, until the society freed itself from the defection. The inspiration also of the Holy Word was defined and insisted upon with an earnestness intense and fruitful through his whole life.

The uncompromising fidelity to Bible truth, in doctrine and in policy, which the brothers demanded in their teaching, they illustrated in their lives. Their obedience in Christian baptism, in middle life, and in their religious, social, and public standing, was a most faithful testimony. When past his fourscore years, James wrote : " When I

was baptized, nearly fifty years ago, I was convinced that it was the will of God. It is not with me a party matter. I would prefer associating with a Church of England man or a Presbyterian, who was spiritual and humble, rather than with a Baptist who was lifted up with conceit that he was something; but I would not give up the benefit I have received from right views of baptism in regard to the gospel, for any consideration."

The home and foreign missionary work, with its Bible and publication work, inaugurated by the Haldanes and maintained by their abundant labors and means through half a century, and the Bible Society and Religious Tract Society work, in which Joseph Hughes was a founder and leader, are worthy to stand on record beside the works of Carey, Marshman, and Judson. Alike noble Baptist trios were these great forerunners in the missionary century; and their services for religious freedom, over the continents which they blessed, were a prime factor in its effectual struggles. In the case of Robert Haldane this is further to appear from our next chapter.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE STORY OF ONCKEN.

A NEW view will now be opened, to awaken adoration of the working of Him "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Doubtless the revelation may be a surprise to many.

In the latter period of Mr. Haldane's labors in Europe he had much upon his mind, and in his correspondence, the organization of a society which should support in those countries evangelical preachers and Bible colporters. On his return to Scotland the organization was effected, its name being the Continental Society.

John Gerhard Oncken, appointed in 1823, was among the first laborers sent over into the field. He was a young German who in early youth emigrated to England. His genuine, inspiring conversion occurred the year that the society was organized, and he was encouraged to devote himself to study and personal Christian work. After three years thus occupied, he was sent by the society, "a joyous herald of the truth he had embraced in a foreign clime," to preach the glad tidings and distribute the precious volumes of the gospel in Hamburg and Bremen and East Friesland. In 1828 he

was transferred to Hamburg; to an agency of the Edinburgh Bible Society, an organization in which the Haldanes were leaders.

When Oncken entered upon his work, the fact was soon developed that there was still no spot on the continent of Europe where religious freedom could be enjoyed. He was not then a Baptist, but his earnest and effectual labors, dislodging many from their dormant formality, and leading them to Christ, aroused the hostility of the clergy into violent opposition. And when his prayerful study of the Bible led him to the Baptist belief, the persecution became more determined.

When there had been brought with him to this belief six other disciples, and all were desiring to obey their convictions, they were found by Professor Barnas Sears, of Hamilton Literary and Theological Institution, satisfactorily examined, and at the dead of night, while their enemies slept, they were baptized in the river Elbe, at Hamburg, by Dr. Sears. This was in 1834. The organization as a church was completed, and Mr. Oncken was set apart for its ministry by prayer and the laying on of hands.

And now, by the little obscure seven, possessed of nothing but the Sword of the Spirit, commenced the contest to win religious freedom for a continent. This little church was to be the picket-line whose service should bring on the great action of the denomination which during the last sixty years has effected such wonders in Europe.

The persecutions, not yet wholly ceased, have been as severe as the spirit of the age would allow the hierarchies of the different nations to perpetrate. The standing which Mr. Oncken had attained, and his personal attractiveness, for a time restricted the opposition to depriving him of public ministrations, while other laborers were fined or imprisoned. But when the Hamburg church had grown to a hundred and more members, and the places of preaching were thronged, while the state clergy saw their own assemblies thin and indifferent, the jealousy burst out into harsher violence. The Baptists were "made objects of derision, from the lowest dram-shop to the most fashionable drawing-room." The Lutheran clergy forced the head of police to arraign Oncken. The senate prohibited baptism within their jurisdiction.

Mr. Oncken was put on trial ; and when it was demanded of him to account for having violated the prohibitions put upon him, his response was the martyr one of history : "Because I was following the command of Christ, and the dictates of my conscience as controlled by the Scriptures ; and because I believe that no magistrate has the right to interfere with a man's conscience." And to the question whether he would now cease thus violating, he said : "I shall never depart from this line of conduct." Then said the court : "It is ordered that he be imprisoned four weeks, and pay the amount of eighty dollars, and if he shall still persist, there will be

severer measures." During this imprisonment he was allowed only the briefest communication with his wife, and that only in the German language. The officers were to inspect his writing, but they could not prevent his scratching into the plastering of his cell words of God which might bless others who should be placed there, nor could his preaching through the grates of his window to outside listeners be wholly suppressed.

Such imprisonments and fines were repeatedly inflicted on him, and as he went out on mission tours, he met similar treatment. When he had served his sixty years in Europe as evangelist and reformer, he wrote: "I have been formally banished from nearly every state in Germany," for preaching the plain truths of the New Testament.

When through Oncken's labors the mission took root in Denmark, it encountered persecution still more rigorous. Mr. Koebner, on a visit thither, was the first to suffer. Afterward the Reverends Peter and Adolph Munster, brothers, who became pastors of the church in Copenhagen, had torturous and extortionate inflictions repeated upon them through successive years. Sickness was incurred by being thrown into wet and cold dungeon cells; their home was stripped of its furniture despite the pleading of a dying wife; and the exhaustion of one penalty was followed by re-arrests, because they could not but speak as the people crowded to hear their liberated pastors. Parents were fined for not bringing their

infants to their persecutors for baptism — ten dollars for the first week's delay after notice, and double the amount subsequently. And every manifestation was kept up of "the animosity against the gospel, which passed description, especially among the higher classes."

Under all their sufferings these faithful brethren lost not their faith or patience, expressing the trust that it was best they should suffer, it being God's way of publishing and making to triumph his saving truth. Of their oppressors in church and state they write: "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain. And he shall bring forth the head-stone, with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it."

In Hanover, and Russia, and Sweden, and wherever the German mission made inroads, through the Spirit's working in the word and witnesses of Christ, the battle against God's chosen "weak things of the world" was joined by the whole array of ecclesiastical and civil oppression.

The penalty in Norway for seceding from the national church was imprisonment at hard labor, for women as well as for men. The bishops and their clergy formed a third of the legislature in its constituency, and the whole of it in influence, and the laws against "absence from the communion" cost one his citizenship, forbade his marriage, and deprived him of business as a tradesman or an artisan. The king himself was powerless to change these laws.

A message from the king of Sweden to his legislators said that the constitution secured toleration to all in religion ; that Protestantism demanded it ; and that it belonged to the fame of the great Gustavus Adolphus, the father of his country, who won with his blood freedom for all in the nation. This message to the law-makers was, however, but "a glittering generality."

Mr. Nilson, of Stockholm, from Oncken's mission, returned to his country as an evangelist, but was arrested, and permanently banished. Disciples were multiplied, however, and took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and submitted to the cruelties of the police, who entered their houses and took them from their beds, and carried their babes to the mockery of a baptism. "Fifteen times in prison," was the way-mark left by pastor Heydenberg as he still looked forward, knowing that bonds and afflictions awaited him.

Years went by, the decade and the score, and the relentless war was kept up against our missions. A tantalizing promise was given when the revolutions in 1848 sought to erect republics, and published proclamations of religious freedom ; but the reaction and the replacing of monarchies set in action again all the machinery of persecution. In some of the states the rigor was so stern and perpetual that nothing was left for the sufferers but chains and beggary, or flight across the ocean. It is but half a century since Christians in England

and America were having brought to their ears by every ship the cries of these European Baptists who were "distressed for conscience." It will do the generations that have since arisen good to make the acquaintance of those faithful sufferers. Let us approach a representative company of them, and hear their doleful story, told eloquently in manly and righteous indignation.

Twenty-seven Baptists of Mecklenburg, Germany, one of whom was pastor, worn out by years of persecution, started together for America. Spending the Sabbath at Hamburg, surrounded by a great and deeply affected congregation, Mr. Oncken addressed them, as John Robinson did the embarking pilgrims of 1620. And this was the solemn protest which they drew up and, signed by them all, sent back to the sovereign from whom they were flying:—

"To his Royal Highness, the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg:—

"The undersigned, hitherto subjects of your Royal Highness, are compelled by the persecutions for conscience' sake to which they have been subjected in their fatherland, and the positive impossibility of living according to their religious convictions, to emigrate to America. Before their departure, however, conscience constrains them before God to submit to your Royal Highness a solemn protest against the supposition that they are voluntarily leaving their native shore.

"We go not voluntarily, but forced by the severe, relentless measures adopted against us, which have both hindered our efforts for the extension of the kingdom of God, and our practical fulfillment of the divine command to love our neighbors as ourselves; for our assemblies have been broken up,

and men and women imprisoned, threatened with severer punishment, and bereft of their property.

"Against such measures on the part of the government of your Royal Highness, we have, assisted by a deputation of the Evangelical Alliance, made repeated but ineffectual remonstrance. Our hearts were knit to our fatherland, and it required seven years of oppression to suggest the thought of emigration.

"Your Royal Highness has sanctioned these measures, and undertaken all the responsibility. There is within us the consciousness of having ever revered and loved your Royal Highness as our sovereign, of which we deem no higher proof to be given than by reminding you, sire, of this responsibility as held toward the King of kings.

"As regards ourselves, we no more come with a petition to your Royal Highness; for, driven from our native country, we go to seek a new home on free American soil. Yet on behalf of our brethren who remain, we venture to pray that your Royal Highness may be graciously pleased to free them from the yoke which has forced us to depart. We venture this request, not only because every persecution for conscience' sake is unrighteous, but because no Protestant country in Germany can less afford to dispense with Christian men; for the most effectual supporters of a throne are God-fearing subjects. And those are, in our estimation, truly God-fearing subjects who in temporal matters render unto Cæsar what is Cæsar's, and in all things spiritual unto God what is God's. We look with confidence to a compliance with our petition, inasmuch as it involves the highest interests of the throne, as well as those of our brethren and the kingdom of Christ generally.

"We abide with profound veneration."

They also addressed their protest to the ecclesiastical head, whose instigations they charge with exciting the persecutions, and, "in the name of the Most

High," made their appeal to Him who will avenge his own elect.

In the protests, allusion is made to the interposition of the Evangelical Alliance, a society of Christians of all denominations and of all lands, in behalf of the persecuted Baptists in Europe. Action was also taken in England and in this country by the denomination of which the sufferers were representatives. The English Baptists sent delegates on different occasions to intercede with the heads of government and of the church establishments. Some members of Parliament, and particularly the distinguished Friend, Joseph J. Guernsey, joined their personal visits and influence with these delegations. The address of one of the delegations to the bishops and clergy of Denmark so depicts the situation and demonstrates the claims of justice and Christian comity, that it should be preserved as a classic beside the one addressed by Milton to the persecutors of the Waldenses.

The delegates say : —

"By various associations of Baptists, and by ministers and Christians of all other denominations in Great Britain, we have been deputed to lay before his gracious Majesty, the king of Denmark, numerous signed and duly attested memorials, praying for the release of the Baptist pastors, Peter and Adolph Munster, from prison, and from all other legal inflictions ; and for the extension of religious liberty to the denomination to which they belong. This duty, in a full and gracious audience with his Majesty, it has been our happiness to discharge. And we now, reverend gentlemen, respectfully call

your attention to the subject, in the hope that our efforts, through your Christian influence and intercession, may not fail of the desired success.

"In venturing to urge upon you a duty so much in harmony with the office of ministers of Christ, permit us to remind you that in Copenhagen pastor Adolph Munster, after having for nearly four months, and pastor Peter Munster for nine months, undergone the hardships of imprisonment, besides the various other inconveniences which such a situation necessarily involves, are now sentenced to a fine of sixty dollars each, with costs; also that in Langeland, among other instances of hardship, a poor man named Andreas has been called to suffer the loss of all his worldly goods, together with imprisonment on bread and water, and that similar fines and punishments are threatened against all Baptists who do not bring their children to the Lutheran font.

"That measures so severe should have been adopted against men guilty of no other crime than the peaceable diffusion of their conscientious opinions, cannot in our judgment be reconciled with the principles either of humanity or justice; and while it must occasion pain to those who are actuated by no feeling higher than philanthropy, it will especially be deplored by all who have felt the love, and are animated by the spirit, of Christ. Hence, throughout Great Britain and America, wherever these proceedings have been made known, they have been received by the several branches of the Christian church with such unmingled feelings of grief and astonishment, as that clergymen of all denominations have with most unusual promptitude availed themselves of the opportunity afforded by our visit to this country, of laying their sentiments on this subject at his Majesty's feet. Most willing, reverend gentlemen, are we to believe that, by what has already taken place, your pious and benevolent feelings have been painfully shocked, and that you must feel with us that to seize the property, deal harshly with the persons, and distress the families of men conscientious, however mistaken you may suppose

them in their views, can never, as it is alien to the spirit of Christ, promote his glory.

“That under all forms of government and religion the Baptists are permitted unmolested to maintain and propagate their opinions except in one or two of these countries which owe their religion to the right of private judgment established by the immortal Luther, appears to us, and to the whole Christian world, as far as the circumstance is known, an anomaly most strangely unaccountable; and therefore, in the name and for the honor of our common Christianity, we earnestly invoke your powerful aid to take from the enemies of divine truth the prolonged opportunity of saying that professed Christians withhold from each other that charity which pagans are unwilling to deny.

“That the Lutheran in England has the fullest liberty to practice and propagate his faith we most heartily rejoice; and were an attempt made by any class of British Christians to injure him, either in his person or estate, for doing so, we should unhesitatingly denounce its spirit as injurious to religion and dishonoring to Christ.

“It is alleged against the Baptists in general that, using no written confessions of faith, their sentiments must of necessity be fluctuating and indefinite. As to this, we adduce the decisive testimony of three hundred years to show that, while churches with written confessions of faith have been and still are agitated by great differences of opinion, a striking uniformity of sentiment in all important points has prevailed amongst the Baptists, as the result of that more direct appeal which they are in the constant habit of making to the word of God; so that the tenets anciently expressed by Johnson, Bunyan, and Gill are with little or no difference those which have been more recently propounded by Fuller, Carey, and Hall.

“And now, reverend gentlemen, fully assured of the truth and importance of these statements, and with a solemn anticipation of that day when we must all appear before the judg-

ment-seat of Christ, we beseech you, by the mercies of Him 'who hath redeemed us into God by his blood,' to rise instantly, 'as with the heart of one man,' and join with us in a holy testimony against regulations and practices which involve so dangerous a supposition as that it is possible by carnal weapons to promote the interests of truth. So, reverend gentlemen, shall it once more on earth be said, 'See how these Christians love one another.' And Jesus Christ, accepting as a personal service your kindness to his disciples, will say at last, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'"

In this country every available means was used to throw the influence of the Baptist denomination, and also that of the United States government, into serving the cause of the oppressed in Europe. The eminent Dr. Welch, of Albany, was sent by the Foreign Mission Board to Washington, to confer with President Van Buren and the secretary of state, and enlist their help so far as consistent. Hon. William L. Marcy, who was then counselor of the president as to foreign affairs, doubtless assisted on that occasion, as he did afterward when secretary of the state, and also of war, in the cabinets of Polk and Pierce.

Deputations were sent by the board to Germany and Denmark to endeavor to influence their governments. Professors Hackett and Conant, of Newton and Hamilton theological seminaries, were constituted one of these deputations. Professor Hackett's report as to the sufferings of the persecuted is very affecting. He states that the younger Munster,

after being thrown into prison while on a tour, and subjected to cruel treatment, received a letter from his wife that she was drawing nigh unto death. He petitioned that he might be transferred to a prison at his home, and have liberty to visit his wife. The petition was denied. Some of the public journals criticised the heartlessness, and it coming to the knowledge of the king, he ordered the request to be granted, and during the short time before consumption finished its work, the prisoner had the privilege of seeing his dying wife.

It happened that at the time when these American brethren visited Copenhagen, the preachers were out of prison for a season; and in the house of one of them, where they were urged to sit at a meal, a door was taken from its hinges to serve as the table, so thoroughly had the fines exhausted all their means and everything that could be seized out of their houses. "Tears of joy bore witness to the emotions which filled their bosoms in the reception which awaited us. We had come with consolation to hearts that needed it and could feel it."

The prison official was interviewed, and manifested a humaneness in striking contrast with the harsh self-justification of the bishop and his subordinates. This overseer of the prisoners volunteered to assume some of the fines which all their effects failed to cancel; and when thanked for his kindness by the deputation, he said: "It is no merit of mine; they deserve it all,"—adding with much emotion: "I

have nothing but good to say of them — nothing but good.” And he was a member of the persecuting church! The deputation itself was not allowed its visit without being summoned before the authorities, and subjected to an annoying examination.

Their departure was amid the prayers and tears of the sufferers. As with Paul at Miletus, they accompanied them to the ship in gathered numbers. “It seemed as if they could not let us go. They continued on the shore after we had embarked, exchanging signals until the distance hid us from each other. The response of our hearts was: ‘Farewell, dear brethren, for a while farewell. Oceans may roll between us for the rest of our days; but these passed, and we, found faithful at the coming of our Lord, shall meet again on the shores of a blessed eternity, where no storms of persecution can reach you,— where you shall enjoy forever the rest and peace of heaven.’”

The deputation addressed a letter to the Baptists of the country, which might be published as a proof of the fellowship and sympathy of American Baptists with them, for their own encouragement, and for commending them to just consideration with their countrymen. Assuring them of sorrowing sympathy and unceasing prayer to God, which has been awakened in their behalf, the letter continues:—

“We rejoice in the evidence afforded us that the trial of your faith and patience has not been in vain; that it has left you unshaken in your desire and purpose to do the will of God

in all things, and that you can still cast yourselves without fear upon the promise : ' My grace is sufficient for thee.'

" We feel, dear brethren, deeply the difficulties of your present situation, and know well that they are no ordinary Christian qualities which you have occasion to exercise. May He who has the treasures of wisdom and grace impart them freely to you, making you perfect and unblamable to do his most holy will. We find, as was to have been expected, that the eyes of many are upon you, who scrutinize rigidly your conduct, and judge of you by the severest principles. We are persuaded that you need not shrink from this scrutiny, but will continue to adorn in all things the doctrine of God our Saviour, not only because this is required of you by your profession as the disciples of Christ, but on account of the pretext which any offense, or even so much as the appearance of evil among you, would furnish for persevering in the opposition to you from which you have already suffered so long. If there are any who reproach you willfully, who speak evil of you without cause, you know that so long as you have a good conscience, and maintain a good conversation in Christ, you may hope to conciliate the minds even of such, and that at all events you may appropriate to yourselves the consolation of those words of the apostle : ' If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye ; be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled.' We cannot doubt that you will make it abundantly manifest, in all your conduct and proceedings, that you are actuated in the course you pursue by no fickleness of mind, or love of innovation, or spirit of insubordination or disloyalty ; but on the contrary, that your aims are purely religious, that you are governed by the most sacred convictions of duty and conscience, and have no other wish than to be permitted to hold the doctrines and practice the duties of the gospel, according to your sense of accountability to Him who has called you to lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty.

" Of your future prospects, beloved, we cannot speak with

certainty ; but when we consider the nature of the principles which your case involves, when we reflect on the reasonableness of the privilege which you ask,—namely, that of being suffered to worship God according to the dictates of your consciences and your understanding of the Holy Scriptures,—when we recollect that it is the privilege which it was the object of the glorious Reformation to assert and establish, that it lies in fact as to its spirit at the foundation of the church constitution of Denmark itself, and that it is now so generally acknowledged in all Protestant lands both of Europe and America — we would fain hope that it will ere long obtain the same practical recognition here also, and thus there be furnished to the world a new proof that the true unity of Christianity is to be maintained, not by that mere appearance of harmony which results from attempts to coerce the opinions of men, but rather by the generous charity which tolerates those minor differences of opinion that may separate brethren of the same faith, and insists only, as the great bond of Christian brotherhood, on a community of good works and Christian graces.

“ We deeply regret that his most gracious Majesty, the king of Denmark, is at this time absent from Copenhagen, and that we are thus prevented from seeking an audience with him. We should have been happy in an opportunity to thank him for the interest which he has on former occasions expressed in your behalf, and to pray him to exert his royal authority to preserve you from further molestation, and to secure to you the religious privileges which your brethren enjoy in other countries. You will continue, we are sure, as in duty bound, ever to respect his exalted station, to honor his person, and pray for the happiness and prosperity of himself and all who are related to him.

“ We have been favored while here with access to individuals of distinction and influence, both in church and in the government, who have received us with the greatest courtesy, have listened with kindness to our statement of the objects of our mission, and allowed us to urge upon them the consideration of

your present unhappy situation, and the grounds upon which you, in common with those who hold your principles in other places, feel that you are worthy to receive the toleration, and, so far as regards security against any infringement of your religious freedom, the protection also of an enlightened and Christian government.

"And now it only remains for us to commend you anew to God and the word of his grace. The Lord give you rest, and build you up in the faith and order of the gospel. In him we may put our trust ; for he is faithful, and will never forsake his servants who commit to him their cause.

"Yours in the bonds of Christian faith and fellowship,

"HORATIO B. HACKETT,

"THOMAS J. CONANT."

Thus the Baptists of America and the Baptists of Great Britain landed themselves on the field of Europe, as they had done on the field of Asia, as the army of conquest, assigned by the King of kings to the service of winning freedom for his truth and his people. Other denominations of Christians had their place in the conflicts ; but none, we think, have been called to positions so critical, of such cost in suffering and decisiveness of achievement, as our trophy-intrusted people.

It was Oncken's high honor, conferred by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as in Paul's entering Europe eighteen hundred years before, to be the pioneer in securing religious liberty under the civil governments of Central and Northern Europe. So had it been the honor of Carey and Judson, under the same guidance, to be the first to raise this banner and lead in its victories over the despotisms of Asia,

and of Roger Williams, also thus guided, to be the pathfinder for liberty of the soul in America.

When the heroic German missionary had served out his sixty years of official labor in Europe as evangelist and reformer, had been in prisons oft, despoiled of his property and maltreated in his person ; when his army of fellow soldiers raised up to serve with him had shared in all his persecutions,— hunted like depredatory beasts through all the countries, imprisoned, robbed by unjust laws and violent hands, pursued in some instances to martyrdom ; and when, finally, the voice of Christendom, through its religious organizations, and from its seats of national government, demanded that these oppressions should cease,— a victory was won of transcendent import. Thus is fulfilled the prophecy of an early writer, that the German Baptist mission appeared set not only for propagating Christianity in that land, but to assert the claims of humanity and the rights of conscience for its whole family of nations.

To-day, with the few exceptions where we shall have to see our brethren still in the midst of the fight, religious toleration, if not complete equality of liberty in church matters, is enjoyed throughout Europe. The seven Baptists of 1834 are multiplied into eighty-nine thousand one hundred and nineteen in the churches of Europe, with tens of thousands in America who have been sent here from those churches, and won to Christ here by laborers from thence. And how vast the numbers also who, out of

their great tribulations, have gone up with the blood-washed white robes, and joined the song that can be learned only by the redeemed of earth ! Schools for the educating of laborers, in the ministry and otherwise, are established in those countries, and publishing houses send out the Bible, and periodicals, books, and tracts to go everywhere preaching the word. Already more than two hundred laborers have gone forth from the school in Stockholm, whence Nilson and the other pioneers were so long banished ; and these graduates, at home, in our own country, and in all countries, are at work in wonderfully fruitful fields.

We have thus brought out the old portraits of the perhaps unheard-of Haldanes and of Hughes, and the fresher ones of Oncken and his co-workers, that the generations risen up since they passed out of mention, and the generations to rise up hereafter, may learn something of what is due them from the world that was not worthy of them, and from Christians who reap the harvest of which martyrs' blood is the seed.

CHAPTER XIX.

REMAINDERS OF PERSECUTION.

“And it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little time, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, who shall be killed even as they were, should have fulfilled their course.” Rev. 6 : 11.

THE inscription on the Peristyle at the Columbian Exposition,—“Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,”—was as fitting to the history commemorated as it was gratifying to Christians; and it spoke a prophecy as well as a history; for “there remaineth yet much land to be possessed” before the flag of equal religious rights and privileges shall float over all the earth. State establishments, which still sit heavily upon the nations of Europe and Asia, and upon portions of the other continents, must go down before the emancipating power of the truth; and even in our free American republic, where the victories of religious liberty have seemed complete, there are lurking-places of oppression for the truth to clear away.

In class legislation on the subject by States, we had supposed Tennessee to be the last armed foe to

expire ; where Baptists and brethren of Adventist faith, with their chronic rigidity of conscience and loyalty to what they understand God's word requires, have continued to suffer arrests, fines, and imprisonments for their religious principles. Some may think it a misfortune, but none can show it to be a crime, to interpret the fourth commandment as making our Saturday to be the seventh day, which God has blessed and required to be kept holy, and that the same commandment requires labor on the other six days. For so interpreting and practicing these Christian people in most other States are unmolested, and even respected for the sacrifices they choose to make for conscience' sake.

But in Tennessee, cases like the following are persistently brought before the courts :—

“The Grand Jury indicted five farmers living on small places near the village of Springville. The cases were tried in Paris. The prosecution did not attempt to prove that any one was disturbed by the work of these poor farmers ; indeed, the witnesses for the State each declared that he was not disturbed. One of the prisoners had been seen plowing strawberries on Sunday, another cutting sprouts, and another loading wood upon a wagon. The accused did not employ counsel, but each made a simple statement of his case, relying upon the guarantee of the constitution, and the intelligence of the judge and jury, for acquittal. The following is the statement of Mr. W. S. Lowry : ‘I would like to say to the jury that, as has been stated, I am a Seventh-day Adventist. I keep the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath. I read my Bible, and my convictions on the Bible are that the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath, which comes on Saturday. I observe

that day the best I know how. Then I claim the God-given right to six days of labor. I have a wife and four children, and it takes my labor six days to make a living. I go about my work quietly, — do not make any unnecessary noise, — but do my work as quietly as possible. It has been proved by the testimony of Mr. Cox and Mr. Fitch, who live around me, that they were not disturbed. Here I am before the court to answer for this right that I claim as a Christian. I am a law-abiding citizen, believing that we should obey the laws of the State; but whenever they conflict with my religious convictions on the Bible, I stand and choose to serve the law of my God rather than the laws of the State. I do not desire to cast any reflections upon the State, nor the officers and authorities executing the law. I leave the case with you.' ”

It would seem impossible that at this day, in the United States, a judge would charge, and a jury find, otherwise than to cause the immediate discharge of the prisoners; but they were promptly convicted and fined with costs. Of the verdict they afterward said: “We did not pay our fines and costs, which amounted to about twenty-five dollars each, because we considered them unjust; and, besides, if we had paid them and returned to our work, we would have been re-arrested, and thus compelled to spend all the little property we own in paying fines.”

The alternative was that, after lying in jail for over forty days, three of these conscientious citizens were taken out in the chain-gang, with three negro criminals who had been sentenced for drunkenness, shooting in the street, and fighting the city marshal, and set to work on the public highway. And it is

reported that through recent years worthy seventh-day observers have been systematically persecuted in Tennessee and Arkansas, by fines and imprisonments.

That it is distinctively religious persecution, is shown by the fact that other and flagrant violations of the Sunday laws are allowed full impunity,—as Sunday excursions, and labor simply for gain, which desecrate the day to the great disturbance of those observing it. The hierarchical instigation must therefore be behind these prosecutions, generating a spirit of intolerance in the churches of Sunday observers, and venting that spirit upon defenseless dissenters from their creed.

Strangest of all in these proceedings is the action of the supreme court of the State of Tennessee in sustaining the action of the lower court, on the ground that Christianity is a part of the common law of that State. Does Christianity then make the observance of the seventh day instead of the first a crime? When and where since the resurrection of Christ has Christianity done this? And the Supreme Court of the United States, while expressing the opinion that the sufferers in Tennessee were wrongly convicted, put the case out of their hands by ruling that the court of Tennessee is the final judge of what is law in that State. And so it must be said, in the words of a certain writer: "Poor Mr. King, of whom I have written before, was pursued with the relentless ferocity supposed to be characteristic of demons, until death came to his

relief. He, and these two victims of religious intolerance, belong to the chosen band of royal souls who in all ages have been persecuted for conscience' sake. They hold the same position as that formerly occupied by the martyrs and heroes for conscience' sake, whose sufferings and heroic deaths form luminous examples of high thinking and noble acting amid the gloom of the past."

The persistency with which these persecutions are kept up, instigated by surreptitious informers, and often with religious pretensions, recalls the tedious annals of suffering two hundred years ago. To-day, while we write, the report lies before us of new indictments, convictions, and imprisonments of numbers of conscientious observers of Saturday instead of Sunday, though no disturbance of others is alleged; and now, as ever, Baptist bodies and enlightened advocates are not failing to make publicly heard their protests against these oppressive laws and cruel penal inflictions.

Maryland, also, has the bad record standing against her of using her Sunday laws to persecute those who observe the seventh instead of the first day of the week,—Maryland, the State which Romanists claim was the first colony to establish religious freedom. Even the toleration which she did early proclaim, she now denies to a humble, God-fearing people.

In the large cities of many States the municipal government has not scrupled to appropriate money

raised by taxing all the people, to the institutions of a religious sect, these to be managed in the interest of the sect; and large sums have been appropriated from public funds to parochial schools of the Catholic Church. This policy would destroy the free common schools of our country, on the false pretense that they are either sectarian in religion, or godless. It is not sectarian to recognize the existence and authority over men of God and the revelation from him which the entire civilization of our country, Catholic as well as Jew and other, accepts. And more than this the common school does not necessarily demand.

To appropriate the public funds to the schools and the charities of a church would be to adopt the compromise which the Baptists of Virginia and Georgia so promptly rejected and defeated, when those States attempted to tax the people for church rates, but allow each tax-payer to designate his payment to his own church. The Baptists said, This will relieve us, but it is union of Church and State, which we condemn, as violating New Testament policy by compelling the support of churches.

The Baptists also lead in rejecting and condemning this policy in the general government, as applied to the support of church schools for the Indians. It was adopted by the government, and accepted by the denominations, resulting, of course, in the Catholic mission schools' securing most of the appropriations. The late United States Indian commissioner, Gen-

eral T. J. Morgan, as a Baptist saw at once the inconsistency of the action of the government, and made his sentiment known, though carrying out the policy so far as was his duty. He was subjected to much persecution by the Catholic powers, and President Harrison, who sustained him, incurred a telling political opposition; but all the Protestant denominations have come to see the wrong in such appropriations, and take action in relinquishment of them.

The support of chaplains is thought by some to infringe on freedom in religion; but such support is not in aid of any church, but in aid of government itself; and if service is employed without partiality toward any denomination, and for ends which are common to all, no injustice is done. The people as a whole desire the government to enjoy and confer the benefits of such a recognition of the religion which characterizes this country and the more enlightened nations of the earth.

As has been said, in Mexico, and in the Catholic portions of the Dominion of Canada, priestly domination excites persecutions in violation of law, and prison confinements, even, are still reported as suffered by the Baptists; but religious liberty is the law, and the intolerant spirit finds it more and more difficult to face the condemnation of the public sentiment.

The New Baptist missions in Cuba have had trial of arrests and confinements and contested property rights, but the molestations have failed of serious

effect. The countries of South America have yet to take their place among the nations freed from the oppressions of Church and State unions.

The most severe contest which Bible principles have now to sustain is under the government of Russia. The imperial power places in the hands of the Greek hierarchy the regulation of all religious organizations and services. This state religion is as graceless and as heartlessly intolerant as was ever the Roman Catholic, and under it Baptists are called to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in their flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church." Of regular Baptists by name there were reported, in 1892, six thousand and sixty-four with six hundred and forty-seven baptisms; while of the quarter of a million of Stundists more than one third are Baptists.

From a foreign letter in a recent number of *The Standard*, we copy extracts which read as if they were cries in the Dark Ages:—

"'Since the commencement of the year I am without employment, as it is officially forbidden to employ the Baptists, and hence impossible for me to find work. I must tell you in a few words that to-day the authority has informed me that I am exiled to the Persian frontier for five years. I rejoice that the Lord has found me worthy to suffer for his cause. Do not forget to remember me in your prayers. Soon we shall be near to the Lord, where there will be no more tears. Sister K. has died of hunger and fever, and was buried while our brother, her husband, with their four children at home, were prostrated from the same cause. His heart is broken; he cannot recover. What makes the case sadder, is that he and Brother S., because they

have consoled us with the word of God, are sentenced to go into exile, apart, where they will be alone in the midst of ferocious Tartars, and exposed to their murderous attacks. Brother W. is always in prison and in chains on account of his faith. Our sufferings and our needs cannot be described.'

"From another: 'Take care of my wife and children. I have no clothes, and I know not where I can find bread; but to-day I had the joy of baptizing seven converts.'

"Another writes: 'The deportations of our brothers and sisters, oppressed on account of their faith, become more frequent and more numerous. The sufferings we see endured by them in passing through our town are impossible to describe. Tell it to our brothers, that they may think of us at times.'

"Another Russian brother relates 'how he escaped, almost by a miracle, just when he was about to be deported to Siberia for sixteen years, simply for having read and explained the Scriptures to sixteen of his friends.'

"Pray for the Russian Baptists, who are making notable progress in the midst of cruel persecutions."

The following was sent to the *Baptist Missionary Magazine* (December, 1893), for publication, by Mr. Niclas Fadroff, of Los Angeles, Cal. It was written by his mother, who is still in Russia, and is an eye-witness of the heart-rending scenes described:—

"MY BELOVED SON: We are all very well, and give thanks to our heavenly Father for his abundant blessings to us, and to his Son, our Lord and Saviour, that he keeps his promise that he once spoke to his beloved disciples. He does not forget us in our bitter persecution that we are now in. The district chief superior forbids the Christians from buying or selling, and our churches are all burned by a mob led by the Greek church priests, and all country property belonging to Christians has also been destroyed by fire, and our cattle de-

stroyed, and our dwelling-houses in cities must have their street windows closed, because the Greek church people throw stones when they see us by the windows, and sometimes they throw stones at us when we walk on the streets, and our Baptists are hurt very badly.

"But worse than all past orders by the imperial and most holy church senate, is the decree that all Baptists shall be re-baptized in the Greek Catholic Church, and if they do not give themselves to that order, then their children shall be taken from the parents, and be baptized by force, and given to the members of the Greek Church or to the convents, and the father and mother be banished to Siberia for life, and their property confiscated to the Greek Church. These orders are now executed against us one after another. Eight of our Baptist brothers have been flogged with rods almost to death, and sent to Siberia, and their children scattered away from them, some to the convents and some given to members of the Greek Church. This was done by district authorities and the Greek Church priests. They allege that we are the cause of all the misfortunes that come upon Russia, including the cholera and the famine.

"But we give thanks to our heavenly Father for his abundant blessings to us, and that he protected us from the cholera. We are trying to endure all these things by the help of God. He only is our helper, and we believe that he does not forget us in our bitter persecution. We hope that you will speak to American Christians. We hope that American Baptists will remember us in prayer, that we may have faith in His promise that he gave in Matthew 5: 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' And I ask you, my dear son, to do your best to release your suffering mother and your brothers. We are praying for you, that you might have good success to do this quickly. We all join in sending kind love to you.

"Yours truly,

"MOTHER."

The gentleman who sends this pathetic communication writes in explanation: —

“I take on myself to elucidate about the rods used for flogging in Russia. They take branches of willow trees about one quarter of an inch thick and two feet long, and about twenty in the bunch, tie them at one end, and before using them put them in hot water for about ten hours. They take a man, strip off his clothes, and fasten him to the scaffold. The first stroke makes bloody marks thick as a pencil, the second stroke cuts these marks open, and blood flows in streams in all directions. When they have been continued to one hundred or two hundred, then no more flesh is left on the man's back, and you can see the bones. This is the flogging our Baptist Christians received, thus suffering for Jesus Christ and for their own nation, that the people of Russia might repent, and turn from idolatry, and come to Christ.

“This persecution movement began, properly, last year, when an edict was sent out to compel all members of the Baptist Church and other evangelical denominations to send their children to the Greek Church, and forbade them being taught any other faith. A few hundred children, whose unfortunate parents gave no heed to the proclamation, were forcibly taken and placed in monasteries, with no expectation of seeing their parents again. It is described as one of the most terrible pictures of horror imaginable, by witnesses who saw the screaming children torn from the embrace of distracted parents who had no power to hold them, and could only cry out in agony as they saw them carried off by rough, unfeeling men. One woman, a widow, and the mother of seven children, the eldest of whom was ten years of age, was seen weepingly to kiss her little family and bless them, saying, ‘My God will be with you.’”

It almost passes belief that a government of the civilization of Russia, under the friendly relations and interminglings of the nations at this day, in view

of reliefs for her starving which have filled her ports with bread-laden ships from the Christian countries, and in face of earnest appeals from these sister nations, still persists in such barbarous persecutions, inflicted upon her best citizens, for peaceable obedience to the word of God. That word she pretends to hold as the supreme law for every man to obey. But a hierarchy, bigoted to the last extreme, and ruthless in its treatment of dissenters, dominates the civil authorities in their religious interpreting and executing of law. If the civil government was freed from this interference, there would, we presume, be no molestation of those serving God in dutiful ways as conscience should dictate. It is, therefore, the same old war of graceless hierarchs upon godly heroes.

Religion on dress-parade upon the floor of its "Parliament," where "we listened to the marvelous plea of the great Greek archbishop, and to that wonderful prayer with which he lifted us in communion with the unseen God," shows quite differently from what it does on the field of its riding with bloody horse-hoofs over faithful Christian citizens in Russia.

Also the religion of Buddhists, fulminating in the Parliament against the slaughter of animals appointed for food, shows a different view of the sacredness of life when it instigates and rewards the butchery of five evangelical Karen laborers, of the Burman Baptist mission. (*Missionary Magazine*, De-

ember, 1893.) "If ye had known what this meant, I desire mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless."

The officials of the state Greek Church are plying their efforts to suppress Baptists in Greece, and have arrested our missionary pastor, Mr. Sakellarios, repeatedly, and driven converts from the country; but the civil authorities, through their favorable knowledge of the pastor, and the interposition of the American consul, could not be forced to violent measures.

Mr. Sakellarios, speaking of his late arrests and release by the prime minister, who knows his character and work, and by the American consul, Professor Manatt, says:—

"Even my Presbyterian brethren did publish in the newspapers that 'Mr. Sakellarios is not one of us, as an evangelical, for he does not accept the baptism of the Greek Church, as we do respect it.' They did this that they might protect themselves.

"After all the means which my persecutors have used, and the anxiety which they have shown to succeed in their designs, they could not do anything. Neither could they stop my preaching even one Lord's day. They intended to form a mob to attack my house to stop my preaching.

"Liberty of religion and of conscience will come through the Baptist Christians, as it did in every country of Europe and America."

At Dresden, the capital of Saxony, the Baptist pastor is now under sentence of fine and imprisonment for baptizing disciples. Thus even Germany

has not yet entirely suppressed the violent measures which her state church excites.

Spain and the Mohammedan countries have been supposed to be the most merciless in their treatment of dissenters, but we are hearing less of their persecutions, except in Turkey, where the horrible slaughter of Armenian Christians is the latest woe.

In Switzerland, generally considered the freest and most republican of European governments, while all men are declared equal before the law, the declaration must have respect to the abolition of titles of nobility and rank ; for established religions are still maintained, the Reformed in some cantons, in others the Catholic. This must imply that citizens are taxed to support these churches, and that educational and other state institutions are under church control. Jesuits are expelled from the country, and their schools are prohibited. The laws of toleration are extended to "all recognized Christian denominations ;" but the state is the recognizing power, and may except and banish bodies judged unchristian. The school laws make attendance compulsory on school days. Saturday is one of these days, and observers of this as the Sabbath are prosecuted for not sending their children on that day,—a severe infraction of religious liberty.

Sweden, where so much has been suffered by Baptists, but where their persistence and increase have been so distinguished, even yet grants but limited toleration. The Lutheran, as the state church, has

to be sustained by dissenters equally with its adherents,—an oppression which the poverty of the common people makes very burdensome. The Lutheran clergy exert “a controlling influence in the government.” They are often also the civil magistrates, and are extremely intolerant. They have unlimited rule in the national education. Their archbishop and the subordinate bishops are nominated by the king. None but a member of the established church can hold civil office. An “authorization from the king” must be obtained for the organization of any dissenting society.

As the Baptists, with growing strength and unwavering trust, wage on their contest for equal liberties, a recent visitor from our country reports of them: “They still rest under many exasperating civil and religious disabilities. There is, however, a rapid growth of a more liberal spirit, so that unprejudiced observers, even among the staunch adherents of the state church, take no pains to conceal the conviction that complete religious liberty, and the disestablishment of the Lutheran Church, though not immediately at hand, are ultimately inevitable.”

Over the “dark continent,” though her barbarous tribes meet Christianity with no such organized resistance as nominal Christian nations have employed, the liberty wherewith the truth makes free has yet to be diffused. But on its coasts and up its rivers are luminous breaks in the thick night that has so long rested on those vast regions.

“Weep not in bitter grief, O earth !
Weep not in hopelessness !
From out the heavens ‘a still small voice’
Whispers returning peace.
Thy tears are precious in the sight
Of One who marks their flow,
Who purposes of mercy spoke
Six thousand years ago !

“Thy days of grief are numbered all,
Their sum will soon be told ;
The joy of youth, the smile of God,
Shall bless thee as of old,
Shall shed a purer, holier light
Than at thy morning hour
First beamed upon thy peaceful brow,
Six thousand years ago.”

CHAPTER XX.

UNITY IN FELLOWSHIP, DIVERSITY IN VISION.

"That they may be one even as we are one ; I in them and thou in me."

THE persecutions in religious history have all been, in reality or in pretense, in the interest of religious union ; but in effect they have been utterly destructive of religious unity. Union and unity may be very different things. Union in sin and unity in Christ are at the opposite poles in the sphere of human life. Union in creed and unity in spirit are not necessarily found together.

It is a mistake at these points that causes many Christians to deplore that Christ's prayer cannot, as they think, have answer, and to locate their hope of its answer in a far-distant and greatly changed future. But this prayer is either never to be answered in this world, or else it was answered when offered, has been in the history of all good Christians, is now, and will be perpetually. If the oneness prayed for is absolute in every point of view, it must await equal perfection of knowledge of truth, and of obedience in duty, in all Christians. Whether such attainment in knowledge will ever be reached, even in the heav-

only state, is a matter not beyond present question ; but none will question that Christian oneness will there be enjoyed. No more do we question that the history of Christianity is not to leave Christ's prayer unanswered here ; and we believe that in good measure the answer has been and is enjoyed.

For what is sought in the prayer ? —It is not oneness of manifestation or visible organization. The expressions used do not allow of this. The type of the oneness prayed for is that which exists in the Father and the Son : "That they may be one as we are." But the Son was at that time manifest in human flesh. The Father was a Spirit whom no man has seen or can see. The Son was working after his manner, the Father after his manner ; but there was essential oneness of being and purpose and work, and this is what Christ desires in his followers, and what is attained by true and faithful Christians.

Those who clamor for union by decrying all denominational distinctions, and insisting that all should go into one church,—the church of their devising,—are a great distance outside of the prayer of the Master, and of any possible road into true unity. Christian unity, in the present state of knowledge and habituated thought, demands different organizations, instead of prohibiting them. The oneness of character, spirit, aim, and work, will make the world know the divinity of Christ's mission. A union of organization will produce no such effect on the world. .

Nor, if knowledge were adequate, would a oneness of intellectual belief teach what Christ says the answer to his prayer will do. All Christians are united in the belief that marriage is a relation which nothing but death should sever, and which should promote the highest happiness in society ; but this oneness of belief does not make the world know that marriage is of God, and that all married pairs enjoy its blessedness. If all married pairs were godly, and their lives constantly exhibited a divine blessedness, the world would know that the relation is of God, and that he has from creation connected his blessing with it and made it as durable as life.

All who possess the true Christian character love the same things, choose the same things, work for the same things, and work by the same methods so far as they severally see that the methods are the right and the best ones. It is not necessary that they work together personally, or that they agree in judgment as to all methods of work. Even the loving John mistook here, in his moment of short sight : "Master, we saw one casting out demons in thy name, and we forbade him because he followeth not with us ; but Jesus said, Forbid him not, for he that is not against you is for you." The Master had not commanded this man to follow him in personal attendance, as he had bidden John and the rest of the twelve to do.

The principle of obedient service of the Lord is the unifying principle in Christians. All whom

it supremely controls are one. All who knowingly violate this principle throw themselves out of the oneness. If the violation, by act or neglect, is for the sake of union, it buys the name of union at the cost of real unity, and the name stands for a sinner's union, and not for a Christian's ; for Christian unity depends upon the seeing, by the different members in it, that each one is supremely loyal to Christ, as he learns Christ's will. Violating the principle of obedience shows disloyalty, and destroys Christian unity.

To illustrate : Two friends are completely one in their love and associated lives. Together they become Christians. Now a new tie, the strongest of all heart-ties, binds them more sacredly to each other. The command to repentance and trust in him who is the propitiation for our sins they have seen and obeyed alike. The same love of Christ constrains them. Their prayer becomes one breath, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The will and Testament of their Saviour is their law, and they set themselves prayerfully to learn its contents, and obediently carry out its provisions.

But they have grown up under different influences, and there are points of knowledge which they approach somewhat differently prejudiced ; nor are they of the same capacity to apprehend knowledge, and see the importance of exact conformity to it. Together they come to one of these points. One of them thinks he sees the will of Christ directing him

upon a certain path, the other thinks he sees it directing him upon a different path. The paths will take them into different but Christian churches; and perhaps the faiths and practices of the churches will outwardly separate these friends at a point of tender interest, and not without pain.

What shall they do? Shall they say at such a fork in the roads, We cannot even seem to be separated here; we are joined together, and nothing shall break the union; we will compromise; one shall go with the other, though he sees the directing by Christ to be different? If they do this, they make their social fellowship the law, and Christ's authority must accommodate itself to their principle of union; and their Christian fellowship for each other is wounded to the extent to which this matter affects it. How much more Christian, and how much more for the confidence and love between the friends, to say, To be a Christian is to follow Christ; we must each obey as we understand his will; to love any one or anything more than Christ, is to be not worthy of him.

The apostle Paul has given the rule in this case: "Be ye followers of me even as I also am of Christ." That is, in following man we must see Christ over the man's head, and keep the range on the Christ line. If the man swerves, though he be an apostle,—as apostles did swerve in conduct, not in their writings,—let the follower look unto Jesus: "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids

look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left."

Said Christ: "I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." That is the unity in the Godhead. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love." That is the unity which the faithful believer has in Christ. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." This is the unity in all who follow Christ. The light of God shines to us in Jesus Christ. Each walks in the light as it comes to him. Imperfect vision may see Christ,—the light,—somewhat displaced; but we must walk as we see. Looking at the same light, and advancing in it, no variance of vision can cause much divergence, or prevent our soon coming together. At farthest, the lines will coincide at the crossing, and on the shore where there is no night, the knowledge which was in part shall be done away, and unity will become perfect union.

Looking thus at present differences among faithful Christians as proofs of fidelity to personal convictions as to Christ's will, there will be love and respect,—never persecution. Across the space which may separate their church life, they will take sweet counsel, and walk together still in all the ways of common experience, beliefs, and works. Whoever is seen to be supremely devoted in love and the obedience of faith, committed to put his feet in

every print of the feet of Jesus that he can find left for him to follow, and obey every voice of his Lord which says to him, "This is the way, walk ye in it," is in the oneness for which Christ prayed and left his example and teachings; and such followers will show to the world this singleness of type.

But, as we have said, until knowledge is perfect in all, there will be differences which, from the fundamental principle of Christian fellowship, will demand different church organizations, instead of demolishing them. Sectarian feeling and conduct are the source and the result of demands by some that others shall surrender or repress their Christian convictions. Christian unity is the cause and fruit of each one's answering his conviction to his Lord.

What is true between genuine individual Christians is true between churches and denominations of such membership. All of experience, and all of knowledge, and all of work, that they have in common, they enjoy and pursue in a oneness of manifested life. They commune together in spirit, which is the only Bible communion of saints. They pray together for the same things; they preach and publish and personally testify to the same saving truths. Their beneficence flows in the same forms, though in separate channels, to the same objects throughout home and foreign lands.

In matters of denominational difference, local churches and general bodies pursue, with fraternal recognitions, their parallel or converging lines of not

wide separation, and rejoice in each other's achievements. They are the "one flock" of many "folds."

Contrast this unity in evangelical Christians of every name and land with the rivalries and hostilities between great worldly corporations in manufacture, transportation, and trade, or between parties in politics, all professedly aiming at the same good end, or between schools and contestants in the secular professions, and every fair-minded observer will say that our Lord's prayer for unity has not failed of answer.

From these peaceful and prosperous sources of God's spiritual people, how far adrift are the persecuting hierarchies, in their forced unions of formal religion! How blind,—how brutal often,—their attempts to force a Christian oneness by coercing men into subjection to their form-doing! The ancients looked northward over the clouded, cold, and storm-vexed Euxine, and located the Cimmerian darkness on its distant shore; the moderns called it the Black Sea. It is the symbol of the hierarchical religions. Little of Heaven's unclouded light breaks through their sky. The torpidity of cold and of spiritual death, drift in their darkness; or the vexing unrest of oppressed souls heaves the billows upon each other.

Contrast again the coöperative fraternal oneness in regenerate Christians with the forced conformity attempted by priests and bishops and courts. Persecution works hard for poor pay. It acts upon

Christianity on the line of resistance, never of help. The moiety and mimicry of union it secures is the fatal destruction of unity. As Napoleon said, the empire of Jesus is built not upon force, but upon love. Its subjects are held together not by the pressure of power, but by the constraint of cohesion.

Against this only real oneness Baptists, by their principles, can do nothing. For it, in their history, they have done much. They are the last ones who should have been persecuted for making schisms in the body of Christ. Few have had oftener to say with their Master, "They hated me without a cause." Personally they have not been perfect, but have shared with others the inconsistency which drew from Christ the reproof, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Churches have too often failed to cherish and manifest the Christian spirit; but so far as they are charged with breaking peace in the house of God by their beliefs, held and properly practiced, they can meet the charge with a firm denial. The charge can be based only upon the fact that, for themselves, they act upon the principle of supreme loyalty to Christ, learning his will from his word alone; and this principle and action we have shown to be fundamental in the maintenance of Christian fellowship and unity.

The peculiarities of the denomination, therefore, instead of provoking accusations of unbrotherly sectarianism, ought to commend them to the fellowship and respect of all Christians. It costs some-

thing,— it has cost much,— to persist in this loyalty. It is worth something,— worth something not to themselves alone, but to the cause which is supreme with all who are on the Lord's side.

And the most intelligent and candid of other denominations do commend the Baptists for their consistency. Thus Dr. John Hall, of the Presbyterian pulpit in New York, says: "There is some gain to society as a whole from a large denomination's making a stand at a particular point, and reminding their brethren that there are church matters which we are not bound to settle, or at liberty to settle, according to popular demands." President Woods, of the Andover Theological Seminary, Congregationalist, said: "I have wished that our denomination was as free from erratic speculations, and as well grounded in doctrines and experimental principles, as the Baptists are. It seems to me that they are the Christians who are likely to maintain pure Christianity, and to hold fast the form of sound words." The *Independent* credits the Baptists with "holding and practicing as we do, in all good conscience, and in exemplary deference to what we regard as the teaching of the Bible." The *Christian Union*, considered liberally Congregational, says: "We have no disposition to join in the censure which is so freely bestowed upon the Baptists. Their course, however mistaken, is certainly consistent, and we must yield them the respect due to all who adhere firmly to their con-

scientious convictions." The *Interior* rightly claims and defends the same principle Baptists act upon when it says: "We Presbyterians ask at the hands of our sister denominations the liberty to execute our own laws, to know our own theology, and to manage our own affairs, without being made the subject of ungenerous criticism; and this which we ask for ourselves we very freely accord to others. To chide Baptists with bigotry because they abide by the logical consequences of their system, is absurd."

Such fair and respectful treatment should always be emulated by Baptists. What, with honest religious intention, others hold and practice, in their policy within their own bodies, should never be charged upon them as bigotry or treated with disrespect. However unscriptural any matter may look to us, the religious acts of those to whom it pertains are entitled to the respectful treatment which consistent Christians accord to each other's words and acts when they stand face to face. Thus our brotherly exchange of words and ministries, and our united labors, will have behind them the force of correspondent feeling and action within our separate spheres; and then the law of Christian unity will work without friction its happy results, and the world will believe that the Father sent his Son to bring this grace to men. Aye, the more will they be convinced of this if the unity of the Spirit and bond of peace are seen in coexistence with differ-

ences in beliefs and church observances! for less wonderful and less divine in its origin and maintenance would be a unity where all were at complete agreement. Thus shall we seek the continued and completed answer to the blessed prayer of our Lord, that all who believe on him may be one, not by compromising our convictions of truth and duty, not by tethering the Christian conscience, but by imitating him who could say, "Herein do I exercise myself, to have a conscience void of offense toward God and men alway."

It is popular with those of little thought or easy principle to protest that there are too many churches, especially in small communities. Wherever the protest is just, Baptists cannot plead guilty, if the community contains or gives promise of a body held to their understanding of the Scriptures; for that understanding necessarily restrains them from membership in any other church, and constrains them not to keep furled the "banner given to them that fear the Lord, that it may be displayed because of the truth." They should be ready, however, to coöperate in the worship and work which are common to all Christians, whether or not they organize separately. Differences between denominations of other faiths may not be so fundamental in church building, or so composed of Bible precepts. In this case, union would express fellowship; in the other, it would be a futile attempt to smother disfellowship of church order.

It is a perpetual surprise to Baptists how different from their vision of the New Testament church is the idea of others, even the most evangelical. In the *Century* magazine of March, 1886, Professor Hodge, of the Princeton Seminary, says: "There are only two generally distinct doctrines of the Christian Church. These are the hierarchical succession (as the Romish), and the universal, invisible, spiritual body of regenerate men." To the Baptists, neither of these is a church at all. The only churches are the visible, organized, local bodies of regenerate and baptized people, maintaining each, independently of human domination, the laws of Christ. Such were the churches in Judea, in Asia, in Galatia, in Macedonia,—separate bodies in the various towns of those countries. The term "church" is indeed applied to the whole body of which Christ is the head; but the conception is figurative, as when the same body is called "Jerusalem"; or it suggests the abstract idea of the Christian institution, as when we say, The common school, of which the only visible organization is the concrete district-school of a community.

Again the article of Professor Hodge says: "It is certainly true that communities loyal to historic, catholic [universal] Christianity, can never organize upon any principle involving the exclusion of the children of professing Christians from church membership." In this, he says, he "represents the seventy millions of pedobaptist Protestant Christians

of the English-speaking world." Well, if all except Baptists include the children of all professing Christians in their church membership, they cannot expect or desire that a Baptist shall make himself responsible for such a membership by uniting in it. They will see the propriety of his limiting his coöperation to things in which he is not an indorser of what he believes to be transgression of Christ's law, and the source of corruption and impotency in Christ's church.

Rev. Washington Gladden, Congregationalist, went still farther in his noted magazine articles on "The Christian League of Connecticut." With much captivating fiction he elaborated the plan of a community combining to support one minister and one church, the door into whose membership should welcome all who expressed a desire for the maintenance of Christian worship in the place, irrespective of personal experience or views upon religious matters. It would be interesting to see what kind of letter would be dictated to such a church by him who "holdeth the seven stars in his right hand ; he that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks."

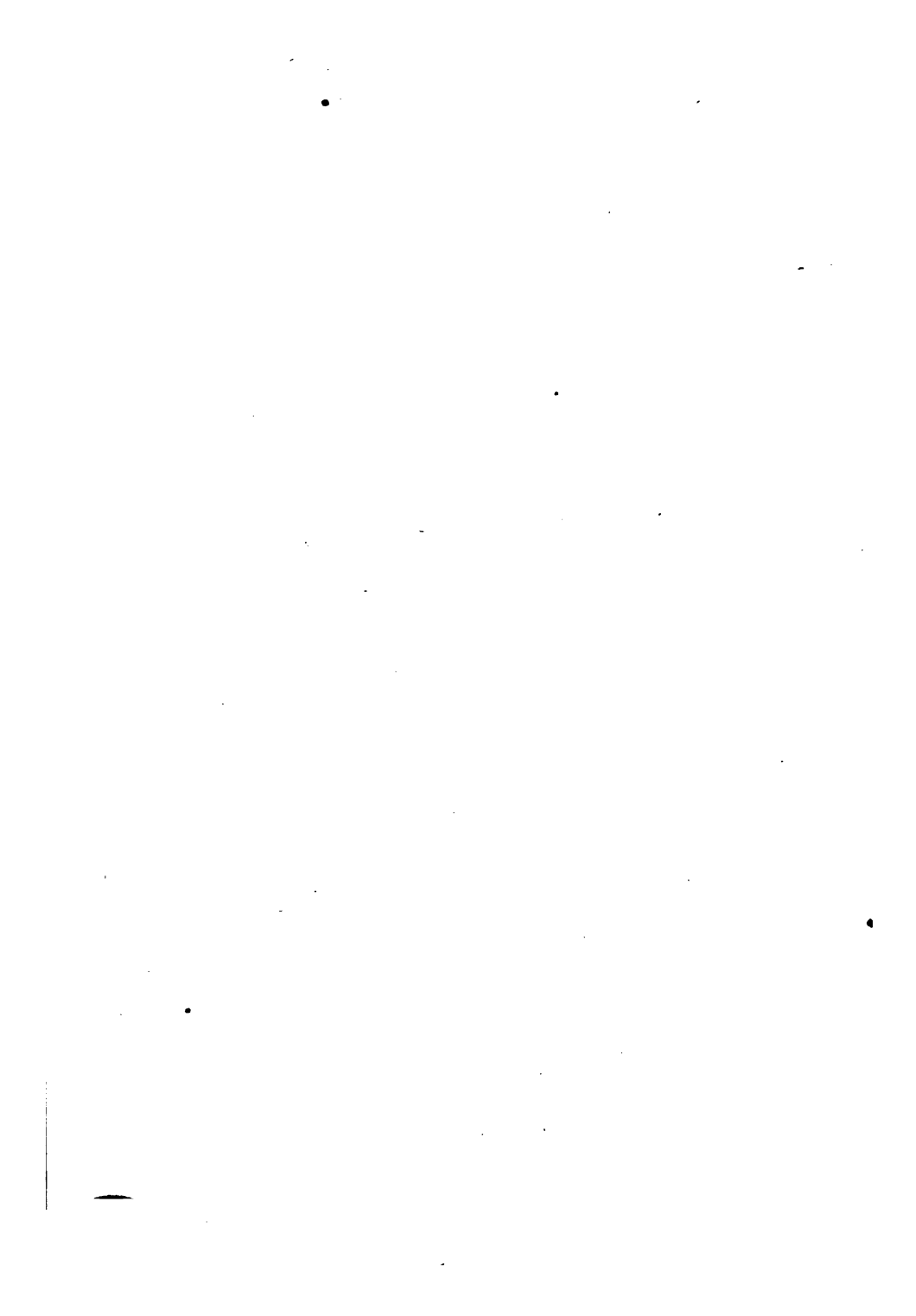
In the article accompanying Professor Hodge's, Dr. Howard Crosby spoke a truth which all mere outside work at union-making has written large. He said : "Down deep in the fundamentals of Christ's divine incarnate sacrifice for sin are the gifts of the Spirit, — faith, repentance, the new life. Christians of all evangelical creeds and customs agree upon

these, and on these they can unite, but on nothing else"—that is, on nothing in which they are not agreed. The unions otherwise formed, he says, are like "putting together the beams of a house with Spaulding's glue, and plastering over the outside. It looks fair, but a breath of the zephyr brings chaos."

Mr. Beecher's forcible watchword in aiming at Christian unity was: "Respecting each other's rights and each other's liberty, living together in harmony, coöperating where we can, and where we cannot, letting each other alone."

For this common-sense ground which is the castle of every man and the basis of unity in fellowship among all unto whom the love of God brings the love of his begotten, Baptists have had their long contention, as one of the redoubts of religious liberty; and for what remains for them to do and suffer, let them appropriate to themselves, as most justly they may, the immortal words of the martyred Lincoln, as the great sacrifice which he was to crown was drawing to its close, and liberty of soul and body was to be given to the millions of a race, and established as the birth-right of all beneath our national flag:—

"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive to finish the work we are in," until in every land every human being shall have found the quest of all the ages,— "Freedom to worship God."



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